ENCOUNTER

CURRENT AFFAIRS – LITERATURE – THE ARTS

£1.50 JUNE 1986

Beyond the Ethiopian Famine

ANATOMY OF A REVOLUTION

By Paul Henze

Roy Kerridge: London Tragedy **Edward Pearce:** Royal Press **D. J. Enright:** Newspeak
Norman Levine: Story **Julius Gould:** Political Theologians **Jean-François Revel:** Terrorism

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"SALMAGUNDI has been the liveliest, most original, and most adventurous critical quarterly in the U.S. for many years."
—Joseph Frank

Salmagundi

#71, Summer 1986: INTELLECTUALS

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, The Intellectuals Under Communism
CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, The Intellectual In Power
GEORGE STEINER, The Responsibility of Intellectuals
EDWARD SAID, The Post-Colonial Intellectual
JAMES WILKINSON, Raymond Aron & J-P Sartre
HOWARD EILAND, Heidegger & Hitler
WILLIAM PFAFF, The Journalist as Intellectual
CHRISTOPHER LASCH Democracy & The Intellectual
& other essays, panel discussions, interviews

EXCERPTS:

George Steiner: "To be sitting in opulent safety in some immensely rewarded university chair and make oneself a spokesman for terrorism in a far part of the earth is contemptible, sheer cant. An intellectual must at least try to live what he professes."

Conor Cruise O'Brien: "If you despise the trimmer you are despising Everyman, and you may be also taking it upon yourself to despise what is quite real in yourself."

John Lukacs: "Kissinger became a protege of Nelson Rockefeller—another 'giant of independent thinking'—and the two of them came up with the nuclear shelter and 'the missile gap.' Of course we know there was no 'gap' between '57 and '61. But that didn't hurt Kissinger's reputation at all. He was an 'expert' in a democracy which likes to take the word of experts. In this respect he didn't much differ from sociologists, economists or those sex therapists whose contribution to marital unhappiness is yet to be measured."

Leszek Kolakowski: "A friend studying in Germany many years ago noticed that there were two kinds of butter on the shelves in the shops. One was a plain butter; the other was labeled 'genuine butter.' People knew that the container labelled simply 'butter' had real butter in it whereas the other was fake, *echt butter*. I am reminded of this when I hear about 'true' or 'genuine' democracy as opposed to simple 'democracy'."

_____ Please send me a FREE copy of SALMAGUNDI #71 (352 pages). I enclose $18 (U.S.) for a regular two-year subscription (8 issues, beginning #72)

_____ Please send me a copy of SALMAGUNDI #71 (on INTELLECTUALS) for which I enclose $10 (U.S.)

Mail to: SALMAGUNDI
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866
U.S.A.

Enclose name and mailing address.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORS
Melvin J. Lasky
and Richard Mayne

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Anthony Robinson

MANAGING EDITOR
Margot Walmsley

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Bryan Healing

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
J. C. Hall

ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR
Antony Pullen

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISING
Sarah Clifford-Jones

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
Janice Ward

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jacqui Lewis

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Pat Savage

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Pat Shutler

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Shirley Lewis

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Tracy Fraser

RECEPTION & ENQUIRIES
Deborah Lloyd

ADVISORY BOARD
Maurice Cranston
D. J. Enright
Anthony Hartley
Leo Labedz
Edward Shils
Anthony Thwaite
John Weightman

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
Lord Ardwick
Blouke Carus
Lord Cudlipp
Cecil Harmsworth King
Leon Levy
Julio Nunez
Julia Robinson
Jack Watmough
Gary Bogard (chairman)

COVER
David Costa

ENCOUNTER

JUNE 1986 VOL. LXVII No. 1 ISSN 0013-7073

CONTENTS

Beyond the Ethiopian Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution — *Paul Henze* — 5
Something Happened Here (*story*) — *Norman Levine* — 20
Column — *M* — 26

MEN & IDEAS
Tocqueville & Gobineau — *Max Beloff* — 29

POEMS
Patrick Hare 17, Daniel Weissbort 25, John Levett 28, Richard Poole 32, Lawrence Sail 33, Robert Crozier 62, Batori K. Ngabwe 69, Vernon Scannell 76

NOTES & TOPICS
All the Queen's Men — *Edward Pearce* — 34
Paris Notebook — *Jean-François Revel* — 36

BOOKS & WRITERS
The Decline of the Sage — *Neil Berry* — 40
The Tragic Muse — *Rüdiger Görner* — 44
"Knowing" the Mystery — *Meg Harris Williams* — 48
Artefacts & Art — *D. J. Taylor* — 53
Books Encountered — *R.M.* — 57

PRESS
The News Managers — *Herb Greer* — 58

LANGUAGE
Acoustical Excitation — *D. J. Enright* — 63

SOCIETY
Death of a Child — *Roy Kerridge* — 66

RELIGION
Theologians in the Political Mêlée — *Julius Gould* — 70

BOXES
The Politics of Famine Relief (*Philip Jacobson*) 14, Prize Pop Dreck (*United Press International*) 64, Lollobrigida & "Terrorists as Heroes" (*M.J.L.*) 74

AUTHORS 56 — LETTERS 77 — LIFE & LETTERS 80

© 1986 by Encounter Ltd. Ten issues a year (July-August and September-October are single issues). Per copy: UK £1.50: USA $3.50. Back numbers £2.25 ($5.00). Postage/packaging: 50p ($1.00). Annual subscriptions: UK £18.00: USA & Canada $39.00 air-freight: India £20.00 by air. Elsewhere £19.00. Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (01-434 3063): UK Trade Distributors: Cutlerglen, 13 Newington Industrial Estate, Crampton Street, London SE17 3AZ (01-708 1308): US Postmaster: send address corrections to Encounter, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc., 10B Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001. Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A cross-section of our growth, past, present and future.

May we ask you a couple of questions?

One. Which do you think is the most useful invention of the past hundred years or so?

Two. Which do you think will grow fastest in the next fifty?

You're bound to consider the internal combustion engine, the aeroplane, atomic energy and the microchip, of course. But how about telecommunications?

You have to admit there's a case to be made for them, and it's timely to make it now.

It'll take a short history lesson but we promise to make it as painless as possible.

1866, the Entrepreneur.

The founder of Cable and Wireless was a rather vigorous and determined entrepreneur called John Pender.

In 1866 he was responsible for laying the first transatlantic submarine cable.

With the dots and dashes of the Morse Code, it meant the United Kingdom was only a few minutes away from the eastern seaboard of the United States (Stock Exchange and Wall Street closing prices were transmitted daily).

By the end of the century he'd created a submarine cable empire that virtually covered the world and stretched for fifty thousand miles.

Unending success beckoned? Not exactly.

1920's, the Italian.

A young Italian scientist called Marconi had earlier patented his radio device and now offered a transatlantic telegraph service (the one which brought Crippen to trial).

It was three times faster than cable at about one twentieth of the cost.

Marconi made the British government an offer they couldn't refuse: that his telegraph service and our cable assets be merged.

It was a happy marriage which, helped by the new technology, prospered even during the depressed thirties.

1950's, the voice.

Then in the mid 1950's the first coaxial cable was laid across the Atlantic, carrying distant voices. (Though you still had to queue-up to make a call.)

But the pace of innovation was quickening.

Rockets placed satellites in space, to and from which we bounce messages on 44,000 mile journeys between our earth stations round the world.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Next came larger coaxials, then the miraculous fibre-optic cable carrying voice and data at the speed of light (the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica in a flash).

Now, computers and microwaves all play their part, but our real growth as a company has accelerated in the past four years.

1981, the new freedom.

In 1981 the government privatised us in its belief that companies flourish when managers are free to act in an entrepreneurial spirit (shades of John Pender).

We are proud to say we have repaid its trust.

Mid-1980's, the explosion.

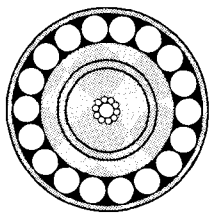
There's nothing new in people's urge to communicate of course. But as international business has grown, this urge has now assumed unprecedented proportions.

Just about every country in the world is expanding and updating its telecommunications. And new technology is constantly needed to make systems faster, cheaper and more effective over greater distances.

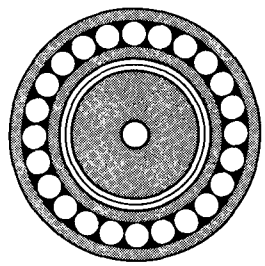
Currently in fact, we're improving and maintaining systems in some thirty-six countries.

In Hong Kong we operate both its internal and external telecommunications systems.

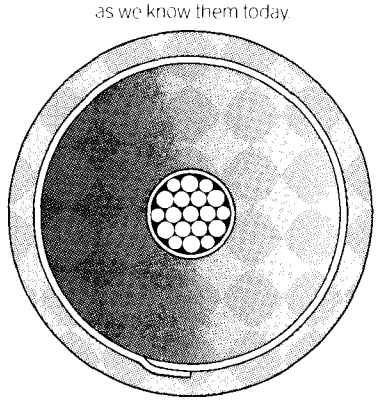
During 1985 we agreed with China to study together the feasibility of establishing up-to-date telecommunications between the main cities of the Yangtze Delta.



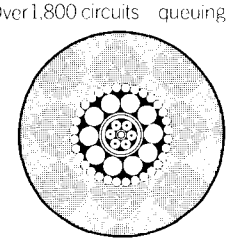
1866. First successful transatlantic cable. Roughly six months to transmit the Bible by Morse Code.



1956. First coaxial cable across the Atlantic. Thirty-six circuits bring phone calls as we know them today.



1974. Over 1,800 circuits queuing eliminated.



1989. Cable and Wireless' fibre-optic cable to America. 12,000 circuits able to transmit the Encyclopaedia Britannica in a few zips of light.

Meanwhile, in America we've laid fibre-optic cable along the railroad from Dallas to Houston and we are operating circuits from New York to Washington and soon, Chicago.

In Barbados we are co-operating with the government to bring the latest digital communications to the island and help its main industry, tourism.

In Bahrain, we have a 40% stake in one of the most advanced telecommunications services in the Middle East and we manage the entire system.

While in 1984, our ships laid a submarine cable linking Australia and New Zealand with Canada via Fiji and Hawaii – eight thousand miles in all.

The long-term view.

We hope we have shown how Cable and Wireless has grown bigger as the world, in communication terms, has grown smaller.

However, if you would like to know more, write to the Press Office, Cable and Wireless plc, Mercury House, Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8RX.

Cable and Wireless.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ENCOUNTER in 1985

The following is a selection from the articles, stories and other contributions published in ENCOUNTER during 1985. The price of these back numbers is £2.25 ($5.00) a copy, plus 50p ($1.00) for postage and packing. Please quote the month of issue when ordering.

E. J. MISHAN
Was the Women's Liberation Movement Really Necessary?
(January)

ROBERT SKIDELSKY
Britain under Mrs Thatcher
(January)

ASA BRIGGS
History as Communication
(January)

ADAM MICHNIK
Prison Gates & Plain Speaking
(January)

JOSEPH EPSTEIN
Partisan Review & the Phillips Curve
(January)

MAX KAMPELMAN, GEORGE URBAN
Can We Negotiate with the Russians?
(January and February)

GEORGE SCHÖPFLIN
Political Takeovers
(February)

RONALD HAYMAN
Fassbinder's Achievement
(February)

DAVID PRYCE-JONES
Graham Greene in Panama
(February)

IRVING KRISTOL
Transatlantic Misunderstanding
March)

ANTHONY HARTLEY
Bishops, Politicians, & Spiritual Times
(March)

UMBERTO ECO
Reflections on "The Name of the Rose"
(April)

MICHAEL HOWARD
Is Winston Churchill Still Relevant?
(April)

ANTHONY GLEES
Churchill's Last Gambit
(April)

SAMUEL BRITTAN
. . . and the Same Old Problems
(April)

KENNETH MINOGUE
The Hucksters of Happiness
(April)

A. S. BYATT
The Changeling (story)
(May)

DANIEL BELL
Gutenberg & the Computer
(May)

JAMES RUSBRIDGER
The Sinking of the "Automedon", the Capture of the "Nankin"
(May)

PAUL LENDVAI
Traveller in Albania
(May)

H. S. FERNS
This Spy Business
(May)

JOHN WAIN
Memoir of Marshall McLuhan
(May)

WILLIAM TREVOR
Music (story)
(June)

MAX LERNER
Presidents
(June)

NATHAN GLICK
Sidney Hook, Embattled Philosopher
(June)

D. C STOVE
Karl Popper & the Jazz Age
(June)

NORMAN PODHORETZ
The Dialect of Blame
(July/August)

HUGH SETON-WATSON
What is Europe, Where is Europe?
(July/August)

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI
The Real East-West Conflict
(September/October)

GEORGE URBAN
"The People are Coming!"
(September/October)

RENEE WINEGARTEN
Stendhal
(September/October)

K. W. GRANSDEN
E. M. Forster's Letters
(September/October)

DOLF STERNBERGER
The Grand Delusion of Dr Heidegger
(September/October)

LEV KOPELEV
One Moscow Lawyer
(September/October)

EDWARD PEARCE
The Thatcher Era
(September/October)

JEFFREY RICHARDS
The Hooligan Culture
(November)

PRIMO LEVI
From The Periodic Table
(November)

ELIAS CANETTI
The Human Province
(November)

MELVIN J. LASKY
Towards a Theory of Journalistic Malpractice
(November)

JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL
Paris Notebok
(December)

ADRIAN SMITH
Low & Lord Beaverbrook
(December)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paul Henze

Behind the Ethiopian Famine

Anatomy of a Revolution

Flying In

CAPTAIN ALEMAYEHU has put on the seat-belt sign, and we are beginning our descent to Addis Ababa. The new Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 floats lower over a plateau covered by an endless patchwork of grain-fields and thatched-roof farmsteads linked by foot-tracks. Watercourses glisten in the sunlight; cattle dot pastures. No sign of a city. Unexpectedly the land begins to rise as if to meet the plane. We fly over a range of mountains clothed in dark cedar and blue-green eucalyptus. Even on the heights, the trees stand in rows with sections of new, intermediate, and mature growth each sharply divided from one another. The aircraft swoops across the highest ridge only a thousand feet above it—and there is the city, a vast expanse of green. No clear boundaries separate it from the surrounding countryside. Toward the distant centre rise sections of modern buildings joined by broad avenues. They curve around low hills with clusters of tin-roofed houses showing through. We swoop over an area of factories and warehouses, across a railway, more fields and deep gullies, and are soon taxiing along the smooth asphalt runway looking back at the capital of Ethiopia spread out for fifteen miles along the lower slopes of 11,000-foot Mount Entoto, the range we seemed to graze as we came in to land.

The thin air (the airport is at 7,800 feet) laced with eucalyptus bites the nostrils as we step down to the tarmac. The terminal is bright and clean, formalities simple; welcome signs are posted in several languages. Officials speak good English. I am struck by the handsomeness of Ethiopians. As we drive out on to the four-lane highway that leads into the city, there is our first political billboard: "THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IS INEVITABLE!"

Like China, Egypt and Iran, Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in the world. Its beginnings are still shrouded in mystery. But Addis Ababa ("New Flower") is not an old city. It observes its hundredth anniversary in 1986, and has witnessed "post-neolithic change" in barely a century. Emperor Menelik II tried several sites as capital before Empress Taitu chose this one because of a hot spring—Filwoha—which still flows. Nearby Menelik built a palace on a small hilltop; it became the seat of the Ethiopian government after he ascended the throne in 1889. The city grew up around it, spreading in every direction, and has today perhaps 1.5 million inhabitants. Haile Selassie ruled from here and the palace has been the seat of the revolutionary officers' committee, "the Derg", that pushed the old Lion of Judah off the throne in 1974. Old-timers walking by dressed in traditional jodhpurs and shamma can still occasionally be seen bowing toward the palace as they did in Imperial times.

Old habits die hard in Ethiopia, and Ethiopians have never seen much gain in abandoning tradition. The Derg, which set up a Soviet-style "Workers' Party" in 1984 and is about to declare Ethiopia a "People's Democracy", has discarded some traditions but clings tenaciously to others. The result is a capital—and a country—as rich in contrasts as it has always been. The gaudy arches and obelisks—constructed of plywood and tin, painted in the national colours, which were set up for the lavish celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the 1974 revolution—have already peeled.

A short walk below Menelik's palace stands the Addis Ababa Hilton, opened in 1969 and still the social centre of the capital, where Régime officials' wives and foreign diplomats gather around the swimming-pool. The large Russian colony shies away, though; and visiting Russians favour the old Ras Hotel which was in its prime 40 years ago. A few minutes walk south of the Hilton, along a broad avenue shaded by jacarandas, rises Africa Hall, an imposing office and conference centre built by Haile Selassie to make Addis Ababa "the Capital of Africa", which houses the UN Economic Commission for Africa. This is only one of several international organisations, including the Organisation of African Unity, and nearly 70 embassies, which give the Ethiopian capital the largest diplomatic community on the African continent.

In the park in front of Africa Hall stands a statue of Lenin, four times life size, erected in 1983. His raised hand points

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down Bole Road, the highway to the airport ("so the Russians will know the fastest way out when the time comes", joke the Ethiopians). Huge billboard portraits of "the New Trinity", severely bearded Marx and Engels and Lenin, dominate Revolution Square, a vast, empty, asphalted expanse where the "broad masses" are assembled to pay homage to their leaders. I remember it when it was much smaller, with flower-beds, and was called the Square of the Holy Cross. The cross is still near at hand, however, crowning the neo-Byzantine church of St Stephen, which rises on a knoll at the north-east corner of Revolution Square. On Sunday mornings, like all of Addis Ababa's six dozen churches, St Stephen's is filled with worshippers and they spill over into the gardens around it where services are broadcast over loudspeakers.

On Churchill Avenue, which leads from the railway station to the city hall, streetboys and beggars jostle pedestrians. Socialism has had little apparent effect on them. Hawkers offer bronze crosses and icons to tourists; a language school advertises courses in English, French, German, Arabic, Italian and Spanish (but no Russian). All commercial signs were taken off office buildings, business establishments and shops on the eve of the great Tenth Anniversary celebrations in 1984. Mengistu wished to impress his Soviet and East European visitors with the progress he had made in eliminating capitalism while he entertained them lavishly with imported whisky and proclaimed his new party in a Bulgarian-built conference hall and the East-German-built People's Parliament. Absence of signs gives the commercial sections of the capital an oddly depressed air. Still, trading is brisk in the Mercato, the great market area set up during the Italian occupation in the late 1930s, though I should add that both the quantity and quality of goods offered have declined markedly. Every revolution's "more" means less.

Across the city the campus of the university is teeming with students. Scene of continual rioting and political demonstrations during the final years of Haile Selassie—though the old Emperor always used to pardon his Marxist student agitators after every major ruckus—the university is now one of the most orderly institutions. Students take no chances on getting shot—as hundreds were during the "Red Terror" of the later 1970s—or exiled to the countryside, as is more likely to happen now.

In a park across from the main university gate rises another of Socialist Ethiopia's new pseudo-religious monuments: a block of pink granite from which the face of Karl Marx emerges. Students snickered demurely as I walked over to photograph it. Striking up a conversation, two of them asked me about prospects for scholarships in America. "We want to learn computer programming", one declared, "but the East Germans who are teaching us know only theory, and we get no practical experience. Besides, their English is poor. We would like to have some American or English teachers. . . ."

Because it spreads out over so large an area and is really an agglomeration of urban sections interspersed with villages, Addis Ababa does not overwhelm with the feeling that one is engulfed in a vast sea of humanity, as many West African cities do. Still, Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country. The World Bank estimated its population at 32 million in 1982; an official census carried out in 1984 concluded that there were actually 42 million people in the country. In spite of chronic famine conditions in many areas, overall population growth is believed to be between 2.5 and 2.8% per year. That would mean more than 60 million by the end of the century. I looked at the young students, and wondered who will need them, who will feed them, when they're 64. . . .

Dissent & Dialecticians

"ETHIOPIA TIKDEM!" —it means Ethiopia First, Ethiopia United, Ethiopia above all. . . . This vague motto of the Ethiopian Revolution has gained meaning that it did not have when it was proclaimed in 1974. It is not as elegant a motto as "*The Lion of Judah Hath Prevailed*", which accompanied Haile Selassie through invasion and exile back to victory and liberation. Nevertheless, Ethiopia is coming through an ordeal which during the past ten years has been as wrenching as the Italian Occupation and the Liberation were. The "Ethiopian idea" has survived. The country is still less united than it was in 1941 when British forces and Ethiopian patriots drove the Italians out. But there can be no question of its essential viability. The Ethiopian idea may, in fact, be stronger than it was then because it has been put to more severe tests.

Western Africanists in the 1960s and '70s often regarded Ethiopia as "an anachronism." Monarchy and empires were considered old-fashioned—and the Lion of Judah claimed to be the descendant of a dynasty nearly 3,000 years old. Educated younger Ethiopians found this embarrassing. It made them feel inferior to their African brothers who were emerging pristine and reborn from colonialism, ready to show the world how noble a modern African civilisation was going to be. Somalis dismissed the Ethiopian state as an "Amhara colonialist conspiracy" against the other peoples of the Horn, with no natural rationale of its own. Marxists—before the Revolution—maintained that Ethiopia was held together only by the lust-for-power of the ageing Emperor, who had a seemingly infinite capacity to dupe Westerners. The Americans allegedly kept him on the throne by supplying weaponry for a 40,000-man army. Who in Africa needed an army so large? How much better to put the money into schools, clinics, and roads!

Awkward as some may have found it to be, subjects of the Lion of Judah—even radically inclined Ethiopians—found it difficult to discard the idea of the Ethiopian state. It was not only Amharas who identified themselves with the state and its history. The Tigreans could claim to have founded it, and the Gurages and Oromos (Gallas) were so intertwined with Ethiopia that they were as essential to it as the Amharas.

Eritreans were another matter. Fifty years as an Italian

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

colony put Eritrea well ahead of the rest of Ethiopia in education and economic development. This enabled some Eritreans to take a lead in Ethiopia after the post-Mussolini Liberation, playing a major role as teachers, communications specialists, airline personnel, and businessmen. When the United Nations federated Eritrea with the Empire in 1952, prospects looked bright. But other Eritreans resented their status, especially after the Federation was dissolved in 1962[1] at the very time that all the other little bits-and-pieces of Africa were gaining independence—with their own ministers and flags, membership in the UN, and other trappings of statehood. Asmara, one of Africa's most appealing little cities, was condemned to provincial status while Ouagadougou, Bangui, and Nouakchott filled up with foreign embassies and sent Ambassadors to Paris, London, and Washington.

Such resentments are easy to understand, though Eritreans are not the only people, or the least deserving, who have had to endure them.

Dissidence in Eritrea amounted to very little until the late 1960s, when radical Arabs and Communists began stoking the rebellion. Castro took up the Eritrean cause and trained guerrillas. So did the Chinese. Soviet aid was thinly disguised after Nimeiry seized power in Khartoum and turned to the Russians for a brief trial marriage that came to a bitter end when the Sudanese Communists tried to overthrow him in 1971. Meanwhile weapons and supplies had flowed freely into Eritrea and the rebellion had turned into a full-scale war, Algerian style. The Chinese stopped support for the Eritreans in return for Ethiopian recognition after Haile Selassie went to Peking at Christmas-time in 1971, but the war in Eritrea dragged on with the support of radical Arabs and other, Soviet, friends. A good case can be made that it was one of the major factors that undermined confidence in the old Emperor's grip and made the 1974 Revolution unavoidable. The Derg turned out to be less tolerant of Eritrean aspirations than Haile Selassie. In 1975 and 1976 the Ethiopian army exhausted itself by repeated futile offensives in Eritrea. This Eritrean stalemate tempted the Somali President Siad Barre to attack from the south with the expectation that Ethiopia could be dealt a death blow.

I have travelled, lived and worked in Ethiopia over the past two decades, and memory of all these things wells up like an eruption of recollections on my return to the country. Not all of them, naturally, are political. I visit the new museum, and find it rather too small to accommodate and do justice to the history that is being unearthed in Ethiopia. The country's oldest historical personality is Lucy, *homo afarensis*, found a few years ago by the American archaeologist Donald Johanson in the lower Awash valley and the subject of his recent best-seller. Johanson recently visited Ethiopia but was unable to get permission to begin searching and digging again.[2] The region where he was working promises further discoveries of early man on a par with those made by the Leakeys at Olduvai.

Until recently, interpretations of early Ethiopian civilisation were based primarily on surveys carried out in the early part of the 20th century by the German scholar Enno Littmann. Discoveries in recent years in both the Yemens and in northern Ethiopia have provided new evidence that Ethiopian civilisation, close as links with Arabia were, may be less derivative than once was thought. There is also a school which argues that Semitic languages and peoples may have had their own independent development on the African side of the Red Sea.[3] Perhaps Semites even originated in Africa? Archaeologists will have a rich field to work when northern Ethiopia is again pacified.

No work has been done at Axum, the ancient capital, since Neville Chittick of the British Institute in Eastern Africa excavated there in 1974. Rumour has it that some of the sites in the vicinity have been damaged by guerrilla fighting. Though tourists have visited Lalibela and Gondar on escorted tours, visits to Axum have not been permitted.

I find it curious that the Russians seem to have made no effort to get into serious archaeological or historical research in Ethiopia. Yuri Kobishchanov, a Soviet scholar who has written a respectable history of early Ethiopian civilisation,[4] has not sought to do any original work in the country since Ethiopia joined the Soviet bloc. Evidently other interests have preoccupied the Kremlin.

Like the Ethiopian régime's official espousal of Marxism-Leninism and adherence to the Soviet-Cuban political fraternity, which is propagandistically intense but seems to lack real depth, the Soviet approach to Ethiopia seems to lack genuine commitment. Delegations come; cultural agreements are signed; bookshops are stuffed with well-printed English and Amharic editions of all the classics of Marxism-Leninism and Russian literature (which sell for a fraction of the price Soviet publishing outlets and Collet's charge in London). One Comrade Viktor Amlinski led a Writers' Delegation to Ethiopia on a fraternal visit stressing "the Role of Literature in Building Socialism." Members of the delegation were reported in the press as being "highly impressed by the activities of the *kebeles*,[5] which they described as the most interesting part of socialist Ethiopia's social structure." An announcement in the press gave notice of a new Soviet exhibition:

"Technical and Artistic Creative Effort by the Students of

---

[1] It had lasted ten years, longer than any other federation in Africa.

[2] Donald Johanson and Maitland Edey, *Lucy, the Beginnings of Humankind* (1981).

French archaeologists have continued their work in Ethiopia without interruption. At Melka Kontoure, on the upper Awash not far from the capital, Jean Chevaillon continues to bring to light immense quantities of stone tools as well as early hominid remains. Francis Anfray, who spent many years uncovering Axumite remains in Tigre and Eritrea, has shifted his attention to the south-west. Meanwhile, in cooperation with a French team that has managed to work in the Yemens in spite of political uncertainties, Roger Schneider is compiling a corpus of all known Axumite inscriptions, interpreted in the light of recent discoveries in South Arabia.

[3] See Donald N. Levine, *Greater Ethiopia* (1974).

[4] *Axum*, published in English translation by the Pennsylvania State University Press (1979).

[5] Neighbourhood associations, which were given free rein during the Red Terror, but have now been curtailed.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Vocational Training Schools in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of the USSR."

This notice, amusingly, appeared directly below an advertisement for correspondence courses from the Trans-World Tutorial College in Jersey: "Train for Careers that Pay!" No surprise that the correspondence courses are likely to have much more appeal to the average Ethiopian student—who still thirsts to study in the West—than the Soviet exhibit.

For most of the foreigners who have been involved with Ethiopia in modern times, the fascination of the country's culture and history, as well as its present life, has been intense. The amount of scholarship that continues to be produced on Ethiopia—some of it based on research begun in the pre-Revolutionary period (by Americans, Scandinavians, Englishmen, Germans, French, Italians and Israelis)—is formidable,[6] and Ethiopian intellectuals are aware of it. Russians and East Europeans do not seem to be attracted to Ethiopian culture. Those who have replaced the Westerners who played such a large role as instructors in the university and many of the secondary schools have little rapport with their students. A few Western teachers and technicians have stayed, and enjoy high status among students for having done so. More are being sought. The Addis Ababa University administration has requested several Western embassies to persuade their governments and foundations to send instructors once again.

ETHIOPIANS ARE STUDYING neither Russian nor Spanish. I asked in half a dozen Addis Ababa bookshops for Amharic-Russian phrasebooks. There were none. I asked for Amharic-Spanish manuals, too, and each time got the equivalent of "Why-would-we-have-that?" I did, however, buy several new Amharic-English conversation manuals, which all bookstores stock.

So, if of the making of Marxist-Leninist books there appears to be no end, political temperaments remain recalcitrant and ideology rarely goes by the book. The "Spanish accent" of Castro's approach to the Horn Confederation was not persuasive for very long after his Spring 1977 tour of duty. The Soviets were stuck with a crumbling "socialist brotherhood" as Yemenite Marxists disagreed with Somali Leninists, and the home-grown dialectical experts on Ogaden and Eritrea fell out with fellow ideologists in Ethiopia. Moscow messengers keep on trying to persuade the Marxist Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) to do a deal with the Derg; but with no success. For the Derg cannot trust them any more than it can trust the Marxists of the Tigre Popular Liberation Front or indeed the local EPRP (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party) Marxists who accuse the Derg of

> "having committed the infamous act of carrying out a capitalist revolution in the name of Marxism and, even worse, having destroyed the Ethiopian socialists in the name of socialism."[7]

Eastern Approaches

HOW RELEVANT, though, is all this Marxist ideological background and noise? Contrary to pro-Soviet theorists who invent facts to justify the interpretation they would like to give the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974,[8] the changes in government which occurred during that momentous year did not arise from a massive upwelling of peasant discontent. Nor was urban unrest more than an incidental factor in creating a revolutionary situation. Military restiveness was at least as important. The key factor that caused a series of non-violent protest actions to evolve into a "revolutionary situation" was the inability of the Imperial régime to respond to stress.

In large part, this was a failure of Emperor Haile Selassie who had provided dynamic leadership for nearly 50 years. His style of leadership was far from dictatorial; it was paternalistic and mildly authoritarian. Even the "young technocrats"—men with modern education, often acquired or completed abroad, who had become prominent in the middle levels of government during the 1960s—were accustomed to depending on the Emperor for initiative and reluctant to take major decisions on their own.[9] The traditional governing classes, as revolutionary events proved, had lost much of their capacity to mobilise and act in a time of crisis. The political orientation of both the modern and the traditional leadership elements was vertical. There was very little sub-group cohesion. Haile Selassie, nearing 82, had postponed reorganising and reinvigorating his government until it was too late. (He had kept the same Prime Minister for almost sixteen years!) The Imperial régime in Ethiopia fell victim to a combination of problems in 1974, none—or all—of which in themselves would

---

[6] E.g.: Darrell Bates, *The Abyssinian Difficulty* (Oxford, 1979); Ulrich Braukämper, *Geschichte der Hadiya Süd Athiopiens* (Wiesbaden, 1980); Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia* (Stockholm, 1978); Pierre Gouin, *Earthquake History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa* (Ottawa, 1979); Gontran de Juniac, *Le Dernier Roi des Rois* (Paris, 1979); Uri Almagor, *Pastoral Partners—Affinity and Bond Partnership among the Dassanetch of Southwest Ethiopia* (Manchester, 1978).

[7] My quotation is from Michael Chege's "The Revolution Betrayed: Ethiopia, 1974-79", in the *Journal of Modern African Studies* (No. 3, 1979), p. 370. Chege's intense, intellectually brilliant critique of the Derg from the viewpoint of the EPRP and what he considers "pure Marxism-Leninism" reveals more about the weakness of these Marxist ideologues in Ethiopia and their failure to understand the essentials of power than any other analysis I have seen.

[8] See, e.g., Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux in *The Ethiopian Revolution* (New York, Schocken; London, Verso, 1981).

[9] The best available analysis of the imperial system in Ethiopia remains Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government* (New York, Praeger; London, Longmans, 1969).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have constituted an unmanageable challenge just a few years before.[10]

Haile Selassie's government had been neither notably corrupt nor (by Third World standards) particularly oppressive. As discontent began to be expressed openly in early 1974, the characteristic governmental response was half-hearted attempts at conciliation and hurried promises of reform. The military were not employed against the civil population. Violence was exceptional. Ministerial changes, once the process began, followed each other so quickly that no governing team had a chance to consolidate its position or even formulate a coherent response to the growing—but not very radical—demands for accelerated change. The revolutionary process was remarkably good-natured well beyond the point where a bewildered Haile Selassie was bundled into a Volkswagen on the eve of the Ethiopian New Year in September 1974, and driven away from his palace to imprisonment.

There was no visible outside interference in Ethiopian affairs as the revolution gained momentum. One can say this for certain as far as the West is concerned, for the Ethiopian Revolution occurred at a time when the country's principal supporting power, the United States, was immobilised by the Watergate crisis and defeat in Viet Nam. If there was clandestine interference from the East—a subject on which we lack concrete information—it was modest in scale and confined to the giving of political advice, not to supplying arms or exertion of other forms of pressure.[11] "Eastern influence" need not be postulated to explain the abrupt turn toward Marxism-Leninism which occurred when the "Provisional Military Administrative Committee" (PMAC, more commonly known by the newly coined Amharic term, the Derg) took power from the Imperial government and then, a few weeks later, largely as a result of its own internal differences, fell into crisis and executed 59 officials of the former government. When the Ethiopian Revolution turned sharply leftward, it also turned bloody. Blood has never stopped flowing in Ethiopia since.[12]

THE DERG, a hurriedly organised group which operated in highly secretive fashion from the very beginning, was rent with factionalism. Major Mengistu Haile-Mariam remained in the background until early 1977, but was identified early as one of the Derg's most energetic and ruthless members.

We still know too little about this man to judge what went into the formation of his basic political outlook and why he displayed such an early and strong aversion to the US and to Western liberal-democratic principles. There are, I think, possible parallels with Fidel Castro. Before any of the prerequisites for a socialist system had been created in Ethiopia, Mengistu became an uncompromising advocate of "Ethiopian Socialism", which seemed to have both Russian and Chinese features.[13] The main appeal of "socialism" to him and his closest associates may, however, have been simply that it justified military dictatorship in the name of the People —without requiring the Derg to risk its often precarious hold on power by even giving lip-service to the illusion that the new government was "the people's choice."

Imperial Ethiopia had a well-defined, functioning constitutional structure and a parliamentary system that could have been exploited to create the framework for an East-European-type "People's Democracy." The Derg confined this structure to the dustbin of history without a moment's hesitation. No nationwide "people's congress" was called to confer legitimacy on the PMAC's rule. Not even sham elections were held. No new constitution was drafted. When, after a long delay and a great deal of Soviet pressure, a Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party (MLVP) was finally proclaimed in September 1984, on the tenth anniversary of the deposition of Haile Selassie, the title *Provisional* Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia remained in use.[14]

In spite of some early similarities with Chinese Communist practice, there is no serious evidence of Chinese Communist influence on the Ethiopian Revolution or orientation toward China by any significant Derg faction.[15] The elements in the Derg that kept coming out on top in the frequent bloody confrontations that occurred through 1977 clearly opted for Soviet-style socialism and a strong Moscow orientation. The elements that kept losing out (and usually paying with their lives) seem almost invariably to have favoured a more non-aligned position or some degree of rapprochement to the West. Important Derg elements—including Mengistu—expected that adopting a Soviet-style social, political, and economic system would accelerate—and ensure—development of a close strategic relationship. This was a naive expectation, and it over-simplified the task of reorientation from long-standing Western relationships.

---

[10] In 1960 the Imperial Bodyguard revolted while Haile Selassie was on a visit to Brazil; he returned immediately and took charge decisively. No comprehensive account of the events of 1974 has yet been written. By far the best analysis of the early revolutionary period is David and Marina Ottaway's *Ethiopia—Empire in Revolution* (Africana, 1978).

[11] Rumours nevertheless abound about the contacts East European Embassies in Addis Ababa are purported to have had with Derg members during the summer and fall of 1974. Lack of confirmation cannot be taken as proof that no such contacts occurred. The subject must remain open.

[12] Eritrean policy appears to have been the most contentious issue provoking bloodshed. For a more detailed discussion of this period see Haggai Erlich, *The Struggle over Eritrea* (Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1983), pp. 43-54, "Eritrea and the 1974 Revolution in Ethiopia."

[13] René Lefort, *Ethiopia, An Heretical Revolution* (ZED Press, London, 1983), offers an extensive discussion on the nature of Ethiopian socialism.

[14] A series of pseudonymous articles published in the *Journal of Northeast African Studies* (East Lansing, MI) during the past several years, of which the most recent is "The Lives and Times of the Dergue" (Vol. 5, No. 3, 1984, pp. 1-42), provides perhaps the best comment and analysis available on the workings and membership of this always mysterious body whose methods of operation are still shrouded in secrecy. There is as yet little reason to believe that the Ethiopian Workers' Party has replaced, or was ever intended to replace, the Derg.

[15] The Soviets have repeatedly accused the Chinese of supporting dissident movements in Ethiopia as well as separatists. See, e.g., Anatoli Gromyko (ed.), *Sovremennye Problemy i Vneshnyaya Politika Efiopii* (*Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, Moscow, 1981).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

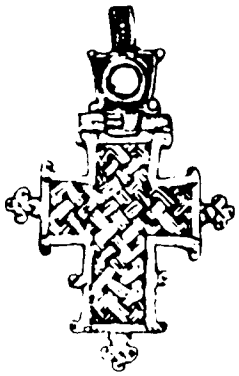
Such attitudes also failed to take into account the factors which had to influence Soviet judgments on how power could be consolidated throughout the whole Horn/South Arabian region. As the events of 1977 proved, the Soviets recognised Ethiopia as the pivotal country and greatest political prize in the region, but their basic political conservatism prevented them from jettisoning the large investment they had made in Somalia, starting in the early 1960s. Their most significant response to the Ethiopian Revolution, in fact, was a rapid expansion of military aid to Somalia, fulfilling the promise of a full client-relationship inherent in the signing of a "Friendship Treaty" with the Somali leader Siad Barre in 1974. They did not abandon support of the Eritrean insurgency until 1976, and they probably contributed clandestinely to the political ferment that came close to undermining the Derg's hold on power during 1976-77 by supporting rival parties simultaneously to see which might prove most effective.

The Derg's radical reforms and the confusion that arose from efforts to form a political movement to "implement socialism" almost destroyed the Derg's capacity to govern and sparked serious factionalism within the ruling junta. In actuality, the structural changes which the Derg implemented in the Imperial governmental bureaucracy were more rhetorical than real. Most of the institutions and agencies of the Imperial régime, and a substantial proportion of Imperial civil servants, remained in place and kept the government and economy functioning. The Derg members, all inexperienced in real management of governing processes, may thus have misled themselves about the ease with which their new system could be imposed on the population.

Derg power was often weak in outlying parts of the country. It was never, for instance, effectively established in parts of the north. Rival political groupings gained backing from factions in the Derg and this factionalism was reflected in provincial government. It is no wonder that Siad Barre, confident of Moscow support, concluded that Ethiopia was disintegrating—and planned to attack, shatter the Derg's control, and seize coveted territories. It is impossible that the Soviets, with over 4,000 advisers in Somalia by 1977, were unaware of Siad's plans—if in fact they did not actually encourage him.

Siad Barre miscalculated badly, saved the Derg, and forced the Soviets to make a choice they wished to avoid. This, in brief, is what happened in the critical watershed year of 1977. The dramatic Soviet air- and sea-lift, including the dispatch of 18,000 Cubans to fight the Somalis, the provision of vast quantities of equipment to arm the hastily expanded Ethiopian military forces, and the direct involvement of senior Soviet and Cuban generals in managing military operations brought Ethiopia into a close strategic relationship with Moscow. Kremlin leaders had hoped for a simpler and less costly resolution of the contradictions into which their assertive policies in the Horn of Africa had brought them—one that would have ensured Soviet hegemony in the entire Horn region. Fidel Castro had been sent on an urgent tour of all Horn capitals as well as Aden in March 1977, to try to effect a federation of the entire area, into which both the Eritrean and Ogaden conflicts could be subsumed. He failed.[16]

From "Reform" to Famine



In some respects the implementation of socialism in revolutionary Ethiopia was rapid, almost precipitate—in others it was very slow. The result, a dozen years later, is a very mixed picture. Initial measures, all taken in 1975, included: extensive nationalisation of private enterprises (especially those owned by foreign interests); sweeping rural land reform which made the State the owner of all agricultural land and all peasants its tenants; and urban land reform which resulted, in effect, in confiscation and nationalisation of most privately-owned rental property. During this period the Derg moved decisively against labour unions and professional associations, and most voluntary welfare and service groups, replacing them with Communist-style organisations under direct state control.

However, the follow-up to these initial moves was often far from thorough or efficient. Banking was not completely nationalised. Many small- and medium-scale private industrial and commercial establishments were permitted to continue. Eventually there was a shift of policy to trying to attract foreign investment, but it has met with little response from potential investors. The Derg's authoritarian methods, the secrecy of its decision-making processes, and the ideological pronouncements—invariably reflecting Soviet-style approaches to political and economic management—left little doubt among the population of its ultimate intentions: to create in Ethiopia a classic Soviet-style people's democracy.[17]

Initial positive peasant response to land reform in central

---

[16] Castro is reported to have declared that none of the leaders in the area understood the primacy of socialism over nationalism. Mengistu apparently proved the most difficult to deal with, however, for acceptance of the formula Castro was advocating would have meant a *de facto* partition of Ethiopia, giving both Eritrea and the Ogaden separate status. Siad Barre was more pleased with Castro, awarding him the Great Star of Somalia during his visit.

[17] For a work which discusses these developments with little criticism and lavish praise, see Peter Schwab, *Ethiopia—Politics, Economics and Society* (1985). The author had the misfortune to complete this sycophantic work before the famine crisis of late 1984 exposed all the revolutionary régime's shortcomings and failures.

Admitting that he is "sympathetic to the direction, ideology, tone and style of the revolution" (p. xii), Schwab goes on grotesquely to argue (p. 133) that, in revolutionary Ethiopia:

> ". . . peasants and the urban proletariat are finally, and fortunately, obtaining their primary human and social, political and economic needs. The country is more unified and more at peace with itself than it has been for decades."

Schwab says of this book that it is his "final work on Ethiopia." It is unclear why he has made this resolution, but he will be wise if he abides by it.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and southern parts of the country soon turned into resistance to steps aimed to encourage—and to enforce—collectivisation. In the north, land reform was less consistently implemented; and when applied, it frequently met with strong resistance. Almost all former commercial and large-scale private farms were turned into State farms. The results were generally poor; for, even when productivity was maintained, costs and manpower rocketed. Derg policy has, nevertheless, continued to encourage Soviet-style organisation of agriculture, although little concrete progress toward collectivisation has been made. Regulations forbidding hiring of labour and consolidation or exchange of allocated land have reminded peasants that they are State tenants, not owners.

The state has discriminated against individual peasants in both crass and subtle ways. Purchasing policies (designed to keep prices low) and lack of consumer goods (to buy with earnings from agricultural produce) have discouraged production. Continued nationalisation of some of the most important specialised areas of agricultural activity—e.g. the coffee trade—has driven a substantial share of the country's most productive agricultural export activity underground.[18]

Several of Ethiopia's large-scale public corporations—the Power Authority, the Highway Authority, and Ethiopian Airlines—could not be nationalised because they were already State enterprises with, on the whole, a good record of efficiency and dynamism during the Imperial period. Eritreans played—and have continued to play—an important role in most of these organisations. On the whole, they have to a remarkable degree been successful in maintaining their autonomy and avoiding Derg interference. Many of them, like several of the government ministries, have retained a sizeable proportion of their professional manpower.

The most striking example of independence is Ethiopian Airlines, originally established in 1946 as an affiliate of TWA. By the time the Revolution came, Ethiopian Airlines had evolved to the point where almost all managerial and technical personnel were Ethiopian. Only a few advisers from Boeing and TWA were retained, and most of these departed during the first years of the Revolution. Nevertheless, the airline maintained close Western connections and even during the period of maximum revolutionary commotion (1976-78) was able to adhere to high performance and maintenance standards. In recent years it has reached unprecedented levels of profitability and has been able to secure credit to purchase advanced US and Canadian aircraft (two Boeing 767s in 1984). Thus, though a State corporation in a socialist economy, Ethiopian Airlines is, in effect, a successful capitalist enterprise operating according to Western management principles and resisting political interference.

As coffee earnings have fallen (coffee is Ethiopia's prime export commodity) and other sources of export income have failed to materialise, and as the country's balance-of-payments situation has steadily worsened (foreign currency reserves were said to have dropped below $20 million at the end of 1984), the Derg has been driven to seek new sources of foreign exchange. Tourism was selected as a priority area for development in the early 1980s. The approach was dogmatically socialist—with all hotels, resort facilities and former private tour companies nationalised, and now amalgamated into a cumbersome National Tourist Organisation. Scarce funds were invested in hotel expansion but have brought no significant return.

The famine crisis which developed at the end of 1984 made the whole concept of "tourism development" incongruous.

Even before spreading famine was acknowledged to be a serious national problem, the Derg had been attempting to force most agricultural trade and food supply services into a rigid, doctrinaire, socialist mould.

The urban neighbourhood associations (*kebeles*) and the rural peasant associations were given responsibility for distribution of many staple foods at low (in effect, subsidised) prices. Though both inefficient and susceptible to corruption, the system has been extended as a response to famine. Grain trade has been subjected to procurement price-ceilings. But the State grain corporation has been unable to handle the entire procurement process—with the result that half of the trading in grain is still done by private traders. These are hedged in by regulations which encourage corruption and induce inefficiency.[19] In every respect State-socialist intervention in the economy has created greatly-expanded bureaucracy, a lowered efficiency, and consequent higher service costs.

Both producers and consumers have been driven into the steadily expanding "underground economy." While Ethiopia grew economically at an average annual rate of 5-7% during the decade preceding the Revolution, growth since 1974 has averaged less than 2% per year and has now probably ceased entirely.[20]

Politically, "implementation of socialism" should have led to the rapid formation of a Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party (MLVP). In theory this was ideologically anticipated as early as 1975; but the process was badly botched, with the result that a whole series of parties and rival groups, all radical, competed for influence on the Derg as well as on the population, and they created near chaos during 1976 and 1977. A key problem was the tension that developed between Marxist intellectuals—for the most part returnees-from-exile

[18] Agriculture accounted for half of Ethiopia's GDP and 90% of its exports in 1983. By 1981 per-capita food production (on the basis of earlier population estimates which were revised upward by approximately 30% on the basis of the partial census of 1984) had already fallen to 84% of its 1970 level. The best available discussion of the critical situation in Ethiopian agriculture is John Cohen, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia: The Situation on the Eve of the Revolution's 10th Anniversary* (Harvard Institute for International Development, April 1984).

[19] See the discussion by Peter Bauer and Basil Yamey (Encounter, February 1984) of similar economic controls and the resultant corruption in the colonial and post-colonial countries of West Africa.

[20] World Bank studies continue to be the best source of comprehensive data and professional judgments on the Ethiopian economy. They are reflected in the bank's annual *World Development Reports*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Europe and America—and the more pragmatic and power-conscious military officers who predominated in the Derg. But there were many cross-currents, most of them reflected in the Derg itself.

Mengistu, who had assumed open leadership of the revolution (after Provisional Head-of-State General Teferi Banti and several others were killed in a Derg shoot-out in February 1977), proved wary of intellectuals who thought that they should play a dominant role in the revolutionary government and that soldiers should step aside. For their part, the intellectuals displayed an extraordinary lack of skill in organisational discipline and political manoeuvring. The "Red Terror" of the winter of 1977-78 brought most of this political commotion to a bloody end and left Mengistu and his associates firmly in charge but with little desire for further adventures with political parties of any kind.

The "Committee for Organising the Workers' Party of Ethiopia" (COPWE) was finally set up in response to heavy Soviet pressure at the end of 1979. Nearly five years passed before it was formally transformed into a party. In its initial stages it was little more than a propaganda device. Even since its formal transformation into a party its membership remains small (30-40,000), and consists almost entirely of civil servants and military personnel. Far from being a "leading element" in the revolution, it is a tool of the Derg.

The Derg itself has steadily shrunk in size. Ethiopian revolutionary leadership rests with Mengistu, who has adopted a more imperial style, and a small group of loyalists around him.

WHAT OF "Marxism-Leninism"? It was, I am sure, little more than a fad among students and young intellectuals in Ethiopia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though encouraged by Left-wing Ethiopian students' organisations operating from Europe and North America, the doctrine was never seriously studied and it put down no self-sustaining roots. Neither the peasantry nor city-dwellers (most of them only a generation or two away from rural life) developed a serious interest in any form of socialism. Modernisation in Ethiopia, for the overwhelming majority of the population, was seen as naturally occurring along Western lines. Thus "Ethiopian socialism", when proclaimed by the Derg as its guiding principle, had little meaning.

Intellectuals who returned from abroad in hopes of taking over the political leadership of the Revolution were strongly influenced by various strands of Western socialism, in addition to Marxism-Leninism. None of them had any practical political experience, and they found it difficult to relate to the dominant elements in the Derg, whom they often treated superciliously. Mengistu was little interested in the ideological formulations of these people, and he had no respect for them as practical manipulators of the levers of power. So in a country which had for millennia maintained its independence in the midst of external threats—and among a people naturally gifted in political manoeuvrings, bargaining, challenge and compromise—a situation developed where all the most active elements in political life were characterised by amateurishness and naivety.[21]

It is not surprising that revolutionary Ethiopia has displayed no creativity in elaborating or applying Marxism-Leninism to a highly distinct Third World society. The ideological level of political publications in Ethiopia is very low, and the teaching of Marxism-Leninism in political indoctrination courses appears to be perfunctory. Confronted with great difficulties in consolidating its control over outlying parts of the country, the Derg has been unable to give priority to formulation of a body of ideology especially adapted to Ethiopian circumstances and traditions. Nevertheless, these have made themselves felt in many ways. A major element in Marxist-Leninist doctrine as it has been applied in countries as divergent as the USSR, China, and Yugoslavia—the so-called "nationalities policy"—has been of no assistance to the Derg in dealing with the multiple insurgencies that challenge its rule. Only the scantiest lip-service has been paid to the notion that the country should be reorganised on "nationalities" lines. Marx himself would surely have found it most ironic that the dominant leaders in the most persistent regional insurgencies—those of the Eritreans and Tigreans—claim to be *more genuine* Marxist-Leninists than Mengistu.

East or West?

THE ETHIOPIAN revolutionary régime's rapid declarative turn toward the East at the end of 1974 was greeted with enthusiasm by the Soviets and some of their East European client-states as well as by Cuba; but it did not result in a strategic reorientation. Ethiopia remained dependent upon the Americans for the major portion of its military aid for the next two-and-a-half years: US military aid was in fact supplied at a much higher level *after* the Revolution than it had been during the Imperial period. And the Derg had inherited a treasury sufficiently well provided to make possible additional military purchases with Ethiopia's own funds—these also came from the US, which continued economic assistance programmes and encouraged expanded economic assistance from its European allies by a wide range of international lending agencies. The nationalisation of US and other Western investments (those of Italy and Holland were much larger than those of the US) provoked no retaliation.[22]

[21] The best available collection of revolutionary documents is Claudio Motta, *La rivoluzione etiopica: Testi e documenti* (Argalia Editore, Urbino, 1980).

[22] I refer here to the period immediately following the nationalisations. US laws, which were applied by the Carter Administration only after prolonged attempts to secure "progress" (not necessarily "solutions") toward settlement of nationalisation claims, finally necessitated the termination of US developmental aid in 1979.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The United States has continued to be Ethiopia's best export customer, taking a major portion of the annual coffee crop. Western advisers, including missionaries, remained active in many sectors of Ethiopian life during the first years following the Revolution. But a distinct coolness toward the West had been apparent among the Derg even before it took full power. There was very little contact with Western embassies, no travel to the US or Europe by Derg members following their assumption of power, and there was much suspicion of the Western press and Western intellectuals. Gradually, those Ethiopians who had had close Western associations found themselves discriminated against in both subtle and direct ways. Deteriorating security conditions in parts of the country during 1975 caused most resident foreigners, whether official or private, to feel apprehensive about their situation, and many who did not have diplomatic status left.

The secretiveness of the Derg always made it difficult to ascertain just what its guiding principles were on such matters. A good deal is heard even today about alleged Western rejection of the Derg and hostility toward the revolution. Such accusations have a self-serving character, providing *ex post facto* justification for the effects of the Derg's approach. They are certainly not borne out by examination of what actually happened at the time.

The early political and ideological warmth towards the East brought an influx of visiting delegations, more diplomatic activity, and receptivity toward Eastern propaganda, which dominated the régime-controlled media. A short period of relative press freedom in 1974 was quickly brought to an end. There was no obvious pressure on the Soviets for economic or military assistance; nor, as far as we can tell, were they confronted with complaints about their sharply increased military aid to Somalia. Instead, somewhat incongruously, the US was urged to increase military assistance to help counter the growing threat from Somalia. Soviet-friendly countries, including Cuba, continued to aid the Eritreans until 1976. Cuba did not move rapidly on to the Ethiopian scene and, until early 1977, put far greater effort into assisting the Somalis.[23]

As Mengistu consolidated his power in the Derg, it became more and more obvious that he aspired to a close strategic relationship with Moscow. Still, a sharp break in military orientation was clearly inopportune. As far as Mengistu was concerned, he would have welcomed military assistance from the Soviets, while continuing to receive American military aid. There was no enthusiasm among the Ethiopian military for a shift to Soviet equipment. The *F-5E*s which were delivered on Dr Henry Kissinger's approval in 1976 (as part of a commitment originally made to Haile Selassie in 1973) were received with great satisfaction by the Ethiopian Air Force.[24]

Everything we know and can deduce from the events of the winter of 1976-77 supports the impression that the Russians played a rather clever game on the crucial military issue. They refused to commit themselves until the outcome of the US Presidential election was clear, and appear to have interpreted the Democratic victory in that election as greatly reducing (in view of the Democratic Party's stance on Angola) the risk of a precipitate US response to a forward move in Ethiopia. Their principal condition for becoming Ethiopia's main military supplier was termination of the long-standing US-Ethiopian special relationship (based on a 1953 treaty about to expire). Rancour over human-rights criticisms (which began during the Gerald Ford Administration) gave Mengistu an excuse to expel the Military Assistance Advisory Group and several other US components in Ethiopia, in two successive steps, in the spring of 1977, leaving only a skeleton US Embassy and Economic Aid Mission.

BY THIS TIME IT WAS TOO LATE for Mengistu to fend off the assault which the Somali President, Siad Barre, had for some time been preparing.

There is, no serious evidence that the Soviets tried to dissuade the Somalis from their plans to attack, and in the months that followed both Mengistu and the Soviets were confronted with much more drastic challenges than either can have envisioned. Specific conditions for a Soviet-Ethiopian strategic relationship were worked out in the framework of a crisis that threatened the Derg's hold on power as well as the territorial integrity of the country. Until quite a late stage in this process Moscow attempted to maintain a strong position in *both* Somalia and Ethiopia, and clearly aspired to gain hegemony over the entire Horn region. When the speed and initial success of the Somali attack made this impossible, Moscow opted for Ethiopia over Somalia; but both Siad and the Soviets delayed a break as long as possible. Only when the massive Soviet air- and sea-lift began in November 1977 did Siad Barre expel the Soviets and Cubans—many of whom went directly from Somalia to Ethiopia. But Soviet-Somali diplomatic relations were never broken.

The story of the dramatic rescue of Mengistu's régime—and the full Soviet embrace of Mengistu himself—does not need to be repeated here; its main outlines are well known. By early March 1978 when the Somalis had to admit defeat, and withdraw the regular troops which they claimed they had "never had" in Ethiopia, Siad Barre had shifted to guerrilla operations. These represented an annoying challenge to the Ethiopians in the Ogaden until 1980—and prevented, in turn, a rapid consolidation of a US-Somali strategic relationship. The impact of Soviet arms aid increased tensions in the whole area, while guerrilla warfare also exacerbated the Ogaden refugee problem, almost entirely at Somalia's expense. Though overshadowed now by the massive dislocations caused by fighting and famine in northern Ethiopia in 1984-85, this refugee problem has never been solved. It stands as

[23] My "Arming the Horn, 1960-1980", originally issued as a Wilson Center Working Paper (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1982) and subsequently published in *Proceedings of the VIIth International Ethiopian Studies Conference* (Lund, Sweden, 1984), provides detailed statistics and analysis of all arms and other forms of assistance supplied to Horn countries by foreign donors, and documents the impact of Soviet arms aid in exacerbating tensions among the countries of the region.

[24] Pro-Soviet writers such as Halliday and Molyneux (*The Ethiopian Revolution*) mistakenly assert that these planes were never delivered. They were indeed; and they enabled the Ethiopian Air Force to halt the initial Somali offensive in the summer of 1977 and to obliterate the Soviet-supplied Somali Air Force!

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an appalling example of the human suffering which both countries' reliance on the Soviet Union has produced.

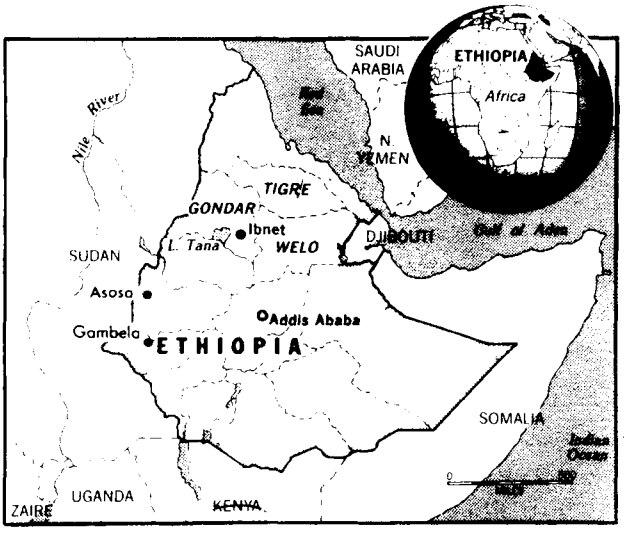
THE SOVIETS have, of course, had to pay a high price in weapons and transport to rescue the Ethiopian revolutionary government—$2 billion is a good estimate—and the Cubans a substantial price in manpower and loss of life. Heavy-weapons deliveries have continued during the ensuing years, but they have not enabled the swollen Ethiopian armies to prevail in Eritrea or elsewhere in the north, where the Derg's military position has steadily worsened since 1979 (following an initially partially successful offensive in 1978). The exact amount of indebtedness which the Ethiopian régime has incurred for all this Soviet weaponry and for the services of the Cubans is not publicly known. It is possible that conditions for repayment have never been agreed upon between the Derg and the Russians. Continuing heavy local costs for maintaining the Cubans were certainly a factor in reducing their numbers from mid-1983 onward.

Ethiopian indebtedness gives the Soviets some leverage over Mengistu. Still, there is no way an impoverished Ethiopia—increasingly strained by diversion of resources to maintaining an army of more than 300,000 men in the face of economic stagnation—could ever repay this Soviet assistance.

During the first year following the Soviet/Cuban defeat of the Somalis, there was overt evidence of strain in the Ethiopian-Soviet relationship, with the Cubans and South Yemenis also getting into difficulties. Hasty efforts to bring about the formation of a civilian-led Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party, Soviet favouritism towards Marxist intellectuals whom Mengistu did not trust, and possibly disagreements over the strategy to be followed in Eritrea (and the Cuban role there) all resulted in the departure of both the Cuban and the Soviet Ambassadors together with other Cuban and Soviet personnel in the summer of 1978, and the recall of the South Yemeni Chargé d'Affaires to Aden.

If Mengistu and his close supporters had any inclination to distance themselves from the close Soviet relationship into which the military rescue operation of the previous year had thrust them, these differences would have provided a convenient occasion. Mengistu seems, on the contrary, to have desired to exploit the situation to get a closer relationship—on his terms. Relations with Castro were quickly patched up, and in November 1978 a "Friendship Treaty" was signed in Moscow. Neither the Soviets nor the Cubans,

The Politics of Famine Relief



AS EVERY **Western aid worker in Ethiopia has come to accept, however bitterly, there are going to be occasions when you have to hold your nose and look the other way. The day-to-day realities of dealing with a suspicious Marxist régime such as the ruling Dergue make that unavoidable.**

It may break your heart that instead of growing staple crops to feed its people, Ethiopia insists on exporting succulent melons to produce hard foreign currency that helps sustain a high level of military spending.

You may fume when trucks desperately needed to carry food to the worst-hit famine regions are suddenly commandeered for what you suspect are troop movements in areas where the government is battling against liberation movements.

For most foreign relief organisations, it soon becomes a matter of weighing up the good that may be achieved for the innocents still suffering, above all the children, against the shortcomings of the régime.

They don't need to be told that every pound/dollar/deutschmark donated by ordinary people touched by the agony of Ethiopia may be—in all probability is—releasing funds for the Dergue to employ elsewhere on projects which might appal those who gave so generously.

AS OMINOUS WARNINGS **of fresh catastrophe in Ethiopia begin to be heard, is it heartless to ask whether the crucial cash and commodities flowing in from the West—forget about the Dergue's Soviet and East European comrades when it comes to putting up real money—could and should be deployed to better effect?**

Is it any part of the foreign aid community's job to lean on the host government, to refuse to participate in programmes inappropriate to the country's most urgent needs? Is it worth speaking out, and possibly getting expelled, if that ultimately damages the very people in need?

These questions assume particular importance in the light of new allegations by a respected member of the US Congress that the Ethiopian régime is pursuing a programme which is killing ten times more people than died at the height of the famine.

Toby Roth, a Republican from Wisconsin, says the drive to transfer vast numbers of men, women and children from the north of the country to new lands in the south has already claimed 100,000 lives, and the situation is getting worse. "A holocaust is happening again and we must speak out."

Roth's case is that the government's resettlement programme, inaugurated before the terrible two-year drought began in 1982, has become a political weapon with which the Dergue is simultaneously evacuating supporters of the secessionist rebels in Tigre and Eritrea and forcing peasants into centrally-controlled State Farms.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in spite of their large presence in the country, were permitted to gain the kind of predominance that would have made Mengistu's hold on power directly dependent on them.[25] Subsequent difficulties are known to have developed not only over the slowness with which the MLVP was brought into existence (the Commission for Organising the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia was not established until December 1979) but over economic assistance. By this time a gradually deteriorating economic situation had deprived Mengistu of leverage which could be applied to coerce the Russians into greater generosity.

HAS ETHIOPIA proved of any use to the USSR in pursuit of its objectives in other parts of Africa and the Third World? It is hard to find examples. In part, this is the inevitable result of continued internal strain which has required all Ethiopian military manpower at home. It also reflects a deep Ethiopian tradition. The country has never aimed to interfere to any significant extent in the affairs of its neighbours, nor has it cherished ambitions of extending power and influence abroad. In this Mengistu is true to Ethiopian tradition—and very different from Fidel Castro.

CITING DETAILED REPORTS **by respected organisations such as Britain's "War on Want" and the French group "Médecins sans Frontières", he argues that the vast majority of those affected were forcibly removed from their homes to barren areas quite unsuitable for farming and lacking proper health facilities.**

The result, says a survey by a private American think-tank, Cultural Survival Inc., is that people are now dying like flies.

Though Mr Roth's allegations and figures may be challenged by others with experience of Ethiopia today—the authorities there maintain that what has been happening is "a spontaneous migration of the people which made the present programme mandatory"—the broader point he is making in his campaign to get a bill through Congress that would block all but purely humanitarian relief to Ethiopia remains valid enough.

UNDER THE *present government, Ethiopia has been producing less food per head of the population than it did ten years ago. That means the Dergue will be obliged to continue asking for—some might even say, demanding—large quantities of foreign aid, cash and kind.*

DO THE DONORS, **Western governments, relief agencies, individuals who dug deep into their pockets for the Band Aid appeal, have a right to expect the Ethiopian authorities to accept at least expert advice about where this aid can best be used?**

It is an immensely sensitive issue, complicated and overlaid by political and cultural considerations. But there is no argument about the bottom line: more living skeletons, more tiny coffins.

Philip Jacobson
in SUNDAY TODAY (*London*)

WHILE MILITARY DEPENDENCE upon the Soviet Union has provided the Ethiopian revolutionary leadership with large-scale arms and training assistance that would otherwise be unobtainable, the Derg's sharp pro-Soviet orientation has tended to freeze at best and at worst exacerbate all Ethiopia's foreign confrontations as well as its internal insurgencies. The two problems are in many respects closely linked.

The Soviet strategic relationship requires a permanent militarisation of Ethiopian society, and it offers no promise of easing tensions with countries such as Somalia and Sudan. An inevitable result is the stagnation and degeneration of the Ethiopian economy. The food crisis which attracted world-wide attention at the end of 1984 had been building up over several years. Drought was only a secondary cause. I have very little doubt that some elements in the régime hoped to starve out rebellious populations in Eritrea, Tigre, and elsewhere in the north. There was an almost mystic faith that the lavish celebrations of the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution would ease all of Ethiopia's increasingly pressing problems. There were even real expectations that establishment of the "Ethiopian Workers' Party" would at last lead to an influx of Soviet and East European economic aid which would cause the famine to disappear. Instead everything went from bad to worse during the final months of 1984. The régime stood condemned before the world for crassness, and by its own people for ineptitude and blind adherence to discredited economic prescriptions.[26]

The revolutionary régime's confused response to the famine from which it has been rescued by massive aid from Western Europe and the USA which it despises, has exposed fundamental dilemmas and generated a systemic crisis from which no escape can be envisioned. Ethiopia's most fundamental need is self-sustained economic growth. The country is far more favourably endowed than much of Africa for broad agricultural development—based on Green Revolution technology that is available only from the West and can be effectively applied only if favourable social and political circumstances are created. Marxist-Leninist prescriptions for agriculture have condemned Ethiopia, as so many other revolutionary régimes, to permanent agricultural decline. The Derg has proved unable to shift course and apply the lessons that the famine demonstrates. Resettlement of rebellious and

[25] A "Ministry of State Security" was established in August 1978, combining former separate Security and Intelligence elements which the Derg had not disbanded when it replaced the Imperial régime. Though reported to benefit from aid-and-advice from both Soviet and East German advisers, this Ministry has remained firmly in Ethiopian hands. It also retains a large number of professional officers who held security positions in pre-revolutionary times.

[26] A flood of newspaper reporting has documented every aspect of the famine crisis in Ethiopia since the autumn of 1984. Recent articles which discuss the confusion into which the revolutionary leadership has fallen, as well as its dogmatic response to its difficulties, include Blaine Harden, "Playing Games with Starvation", *Washington Post* (2 June 1985), and Colin Legum, "Document Spells Out Alleged Soviet Role in Ethiopia", *Christian Science Monitor* (3 June 1985). I summed up my impressions of a visit to Ethiopia in March 1984, as storm clouds were beginning to gather, in an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* (24 May 1984).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hunger-stricken Tigreans to the south-west, using Soviet transport-aircraft, is likely to generate new dissension and hardship. The population of Wollega—where resettlement has been concentrated—was alienated from the régime early in the Revolution by oppression of their indigenous church. "Villagisation" in Hararge, untouched by famine in 1984-85, has caused a massive new flow of refugees into Somalia.

Leaders vs. People

THE SOVIETS WERE ABLE to improvise a spectacular solution in 1977, which gave them great short-term strategic advantages. They shipped in arms and Cubans to save Mengistu from the consequences of the political and military disarray into which his amateurish and intemperate leadership plunged the country in the first years of the Revolution.

No such quick fix can be envisioned now. The Soviets have little food to spare. They lack the resources and the know-how to help the Derg devise even short-term palliatives that will restore agricultural productivity. The massive famine relief operations have opened the country to Western personnel and Western influences again—it will be difficult for the régime to resort to oppression to reduce the effects of this process. Not only has it lost credibility with a large proportion of the population and its own government officials; it has also lost some of its ability to intimidate and coerce. Meanwhile, Ethiopia's external security problems remain deadlocked, if not worsening. Reconciliation with Sudan could reduce strains for both countries, as it did in 1972; but this is likely to be less easy to achieve than it was when more confident and skilful leaders—as Nimeiry and Haile Selassie were then—were in charge.[27]

The ideology of the Derg has been discredited, and the "Vanguard Party" is of little relevance in the present critical situation. While deadlock and stagnation could persist in Ethiopia for months or perhaps years, this seems unlikely. In many ways Ethiopian nationalism has been strengthened by the revolutionary ordeal. It can now be seen to rest on a more than 2,000-year-old dynastic tradition. Religion has been strengthened, both Christianity and Islam; and the régime, whatever its ultimate intentions, cannot afford to challenge religion. Some of the régime's programmes—such as the massive literacy campaign—have created expectations for modernisation and progress that are broader and stronger than those which contributed to the original revolutionary ferment of 1974.

Does the strong pro-Soviet ideological and strategic orientation of the Ethiopian revolutionary leadership extend beyond the narrow group of Derg survivors who surround Mengistu? There is little evidence of it. No pro-Russian faction exists in Ethiopia. "Socialism" as a doctrine is equated in the minds of the population with hardship, insecurity, and bloodshed. My impression is that the exact opposite of ideological, economic, or strategic reorientation is occurring. The reaction to the present impasse, once it bursts forth, is likely to be much more profoundly anchored in popular attitudes and indeed readiness for commitment than the 1974 revolutionary process itself.

Conclusions

LET ME, THEN, sum up my impressions and conclusions. The 1974 Revolution in Ethiopia was a genuine popular uprising with the small urban segment of the population and the military the prime movers. There was a widespread desire in the country for accelerated economic development and broader political participation. The military junta which deposed Haile Selassie frustrated these aspirations and locked the country into Moscow-style "socialism" without even going through the motions of sham elections or any other form of lip-service to public opinion. Radical land reform was not a response to demands by the peasants, who were passive during the Revolution, but represented a strategy of the régime to create a reliable political base.

The tactic has not worked. Antipathy to collectivisation and coercive pricing, combined with lack of consumer goods, has discouraged peasants from producing for the market. Almost all investment in agriculture has gone into State farms, which are giving a poor return. Bureaucratic remedies cannot solve the contradictions of Ethiopian agriculture—the basis for livelihood of 90% of the population and supplier of almost all the country's exports. There has been no significant industrial development in Ethiopia since the Revolution.

Fearful of the commotion resulting from personal rivalries and political experiments in the late 1970s, Mengistu was slow to respond to Soviet pressure to set up a Communist-style party. The "Ethiopian Workers' Party" (proclaimed in September 1984) is merely a façade of bureaucrats and military officers, with no mass following. It does not constitute an independent source of strength either for the military leadership or for the Soviet Union. Mengistu has obsequiously imitated Soviet practice in all areas except those where the immediate consequences would be disastrous—

[27] There was also a better basis for confidence between the two leaders and the two countries at that time, for neither had links with outside powers that appeared inimical to the interests of the other.

Nimeiry had just broken off a close Soviet relationship in the wake of an attempt by the Sudan Communist Party to overthrow him. Though Israel, with which Ethiopia still had a close relationship, had aided the southern Sudanese rebellion, Ethiopia was in a position to convince Nimeiry that it would not permit resumption of such aid. Since Ethiopian-Sudanese strains, then as now, were entirely a function of external forces (and neither country had, or has, any economic, political or territorial claims on the other), there remains a natural basis for reconciliation.

For it to be achieved, however, each government must have the strength and sense of security to convince the other of its ability to implement a genuine settlement.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reorganisation of the country along "nationalities" lines, for example. But he has not permitted the Soviets (or the Cubans, who have been drastically reduced in numbers) to get a stranglehold on the military or the security services, which are still firmly under Ethiopian control. They represent potential areas of nationalistic reaction to present policies. Mengistu has been sensitive to possible Soviet efforts to cultivate alternative leaders. The longer he persists in his present policies, however, the more difficult it is likely to become for him to change course without suffering retribution from his own military or alternative civilian leadership.

The Soviet Union has been unable to create any dependably pro-Soviet centre of strength in Ethiopian society. It has attracted no enthusiasm among intellectuals. There is no creative application of "Marxism-Leninism" in the country. Slogans mask apathy and continued adherence to Western norms. Pro-Soviet orientation depends on a small inner group in the Derg. No element in Ethiopian society—and no identifiable power group within the governmental structure—would constitute an obstacle to a break with the Soviets should Mengistu decide to change course, or should he and his pro-Soviet colleagues be ousted.

Antipathy to militarily-imposed "socialism" has alienated large parts of the country. The régime's control is tenuous in all respects in the north, and its economic hold over many outlying parts of the country is weak. The rebellion in Eritrea is farther than ever from settlement by force and is now compounded by rebellion in Tigre which has spread into neighbouring Gondar and Wollo provinces. The largest army in Africa (approximately 300,000 men under arms) thus brings revolutionary Ethiopia no real security against internal and external threats, most of which are self-generated. As the threat of famine persists and economic development has slowed to a level of almost zero—while population, recently estimated at more than 42 million, continues to increase—military expenditures take up a growing proportion of limited budgetary resources. "Socialist" Ethiopia faces a major systemic crisis.

The second part of this article will be published in the next issue.

The Kneeling Knight

(Tewkesbury Abbey)

Better to be remembered thus,
He may have thought,
In chivalrous piety
Than lying abed feet crossed
When the trumpets sounded through the world.

Set for repair on the floor and pointing
At nothing much,
Like those who guard reversed
A catafalque, he continued
To pray down through the silent stone.

He would have knelt like this before
He left to fight
In Mediterranean lands,
Miming his last departure
Out of God's blessing and into the sun.

Once more he adores above his tomb
Perpetually.
His prayer like an archer's aim
Lights on the altar stone
Lofting the lapse of history.

Through the screen as from behind
His yeomen ranks
You glimpse that steadfast smile,
Calm but not without
Surpise at so outlasting time.

Patrick Hare

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This service is only available to persons aged 18 years and over. Information correct at time of going to press but may

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With Lloyds Bank Asset Management Service you need only do the paper work you enjoy.

Astutely managed, your investment portfolio can make a lot of money. Unfortunately, it also makes big demands on your time.

Keeping ahead of the market. Keeping on top of the 'admin'. Goodness. You may never get out on to the golf course.

The obvious answer is to delegate the job to someone else. But who exactly?

Enter Lloyds Bank Asset Management Service. A comprehensive package which is specifically designed for those with assets totalling over £25,000.

Don't think this is some faceless, computerised operation. On the contrary, you'll have the personal attention of a highly experienced Account Executive.

He knows the intricacies of investment inside out. And he has all the information technology of the Lloyds Bank network at his fingertips.

His first move will be to open a high interest Investment Account on your behalf.

Next, if you don't already have one, he'll open a Lloyds Bank Current Account.

This enables you to take advantage of our 'Cash Sweep' system.

Automatically, excess cash is transferred between the two accounts, earning interest without you lifting a finger. And you get free banking even if you are overdrawn. (Up to an agreed limit, of course.)

Then, turning his attention to your investment portfolio, your Account Executive continually monitors your affairs.

He buys and sells, using his expertise to your best advantage.

Alternatively, he'll leave the decisions to you or your stockbroker. Simply telephone your instructions and he'll take care of all the details.

To keep you fully informed, a monthly statement will arrive. It lists investment values, dividends received and transactions carried out.

Come April, you'll receive an Annual Dividend Listing. (It helps take the tedium out of dealing with the taxman.)

And financial counselling of any kind is available should you require it.

If you would like further details, simply write to: Mike Claxton, Lloyds Bank Plc, Financial Services and Trust Division, FREEPOST, Haywards Heath, RH16 3ZA.

And find out how you can reap the benefits of your assets whilst farming out all the work.

Lloyds Bank

A THOROUGHBRED AMONGST BANKS.

granted at Bank's discretion. Written details available from branches of Lloyds Bank Plc., 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Norman Levine

Something Happened Here

I FELT AT HOME as soon as I got out of the Paris train and waited for a taxi outside the railway station. I could hear the gulls but I couldn't see them because of the mist. But I could smell the sea. The driver took me to a hotel along the front. It was a residential hotel beside other residential hotels with the menu in a glass case by the sidewalk. It had four storeys. Its front tall windows, with wooden shutters and small iron balconies, faced the sea. On the ground level was the hotel's dining-room. The front wall was all glass. And there was a man sitting alone by a table.

It looked a comfortable family hotel. The large wooden staircase belonged to an earlier time when it had been a family house. The woman who now owned and ran it liked porcelain. She had cups and saucers on large sideboards, on every landing, as well as grandfather clocks and old clocks without hands. They struck the hour at different times. There were fresh and not so fresh flowers in porcelain vases. There were large mirrors, in wooden frames, tilted against the wall, like paintings. There were china plates, china cups, and china teapots on top of anything that could hold them.

My room on the third floor didn't face the sea but a courtyard. I watched a short man in a chef's hat cutting vegetables into a pot. The room was spacious enough but it seemed overfurnished. It had a large double bed with a carving of two birds on the headboard. A tall wooden closet, a heavy wooden sideboard, a solid table, several chairs, a colour television, and a small fridge fully stocked with wine, brandy, champagne, mineral water and fruit juices. On the fridge was a pad and pencil to mark what one drank.

After I partly unpacked and washed I went down to the dining-room and was shown to a table by the glass wall next to the man sitting alone. He was smoking a cigarette and drinking coffee. He had on a fawn shirt with an open collar and a carefully tied black and white cravat at the neck. He also had fawn-coloured trousers. He looked like Erich von Stroheim.

The proprietress came to take my order. She wobbled, coquettishly, on high heels. Medium height, a little plump, in her late forties or early fifties perhaps. She had a sense of style. She wore a different tailored dress every day I was there. A striking person. She had a white complexion and black hair. And looked in fine health. Her teeth were very good. There was a liveliness in her dark eyes. Every time I walked by the desk and the lounge she never seemed far away: doing accounts, dealing with the staff, talking to guests.

I gave her my order in English. I ordered a salad, an omelette, and a glass of *vin rosé*.

When she had gone the man at the next table said in a loud voice. "Are you English or American?"

"Canadian."

He began to talk in French.

Although I understood some of what he said I replied, "I can't speak French well. I'm *English* Canadian."

"I speak English", he said. "I had lessons in Paris at the Berlitz school. My English teacher, she was a pretty woman, said I was very good because I could use the word barbed-wire in a sentence. My name is Georges."

I told him mine. But for some reason he called me Roman.

"Roman, what do you do?"

"I am a writer."

"Come, join me", he said. "I like very much the work of Somerset Muffin and Heavelin Woof. Are you staying in this hotel?"

"Yes. I arrived a half-hour ago."

"I live in the country. Since my wife is dead I come here once a week to eat. What do you write?"

"Short stories", I said, "novels."

"I read many books—but not novels. I read books of ideas. The conclusion I have come to is that you can divide the people of the world. There are the sedentary. There are the nomads. The sedentary—they are registered. We know about them. The nomads—they leave no record."

A young waiter, in a white double-breasted jacket, poured more coffee.

"Do you know Dieppe?"

"No, this is my first time here."

"I will show you."

And he did. When I finished eating he took me along the promenade. A brisk breeze was blowing but the sea remained hidden by mist. He brought me to narrow side-streets, main streets, and squares. He walked with a sense of urgency. A short, stocky man, very compact and dapper, with lively brown eyes and a determined-looking head. He had a bit of a belly and his trousers were hitched high up. He carried his valuables in a brown shoulder-bag.

In a street for pedestrians only we were caught up in

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a crowd. It was market-day. There were shops on both sides and stalls in the middle.

"Look, Roman, at the *wonderful* colours", Georges said loudly of the gladioli, the asters, lilies, roses, geraniums. Then he admired the peaches, apricots, butter, tomatoes, carrots, the heaped strands of garlic and onions. He led me to a stand that had assorted cheeses and large brown eggs, melons, leeks, and plums. And to another that had different sausages and salamis. On one side he showed me live brown-and-white rabbits in hutches. And laughed when, directly opposite, brown-and-white rabbit skins were for sale. The street fascinated him. He stopped often and talked loudly to anyone whose face happened to interest him.

We had a Pernod at a table outside a café that had a mustard and orange façade. He lit a French cigarette, I a Canadian cigarillo. The pleasure of the first puffs made us both silent. Nearly all the tables were occupied, shoppers were passing, and music came loudly from a record store.

I asked Georges, "What do you think of Madame who runs the hotel?"

"*Très intelligente*", he said, and moved his hands slowly to indicate a large bosom. "*Et distinguée*." He moved his hands to his backside to indicate large buttocks. And smiled.

He had a way of talking English which was a lot better, and more amusing, than my French.

He took me inside an old church. He was relaxed until he faced the altar. He stiffened to attention, slid his left leg forward, as if he was a fencer, and solemnly made the sign of the cross. He remained in that position for several seconds, looking like the figurehead at the prow of a ship. When he moved away he relaxed again. And pointed to a small statue of the Virgin with her arms open.

"Roman, the Virgin has opened her legs in welcome."

I was feeling tired when we came out of the church. The train journey, the sightseeing, the conversation . . . but Georges walked on. He was heading for the docks. I said I would go back to the hotel as I had some letters to write.

"Of course", he said, "forgive me. You must be exhausted. Tomorrow, would you like to see where I live in the country? I will come for you after breakfast."

And he was there, as I came out of the hotel, at 8:30, sitting in a light-blue Citroen, dressed in the same clothes.

"Did you sleep, Roman?"

"For eight hours."

I COULD NOT SEE the sun because of the mist. But the surf, breaking on the pebbles, glistened. As he drove inland it began to brighten up. He drove fast and well. And he talked continually. Perhaps because he needed someone he could talk English to.

He said he had been an officer in the French navy. That in the last war he had been a naval architect in charge of submarines at their trials.

"I was at Brest, Cherbourg, Toulon, Marseilles. My daughter was born when I was stuck in submarine in the mud. My wife told me the nurse came to say, 'The baby she is lovely. But the father—it is dead.'" And he laughed.

On a low hill, ahead, a large institution-like building with many windows and fire escapes.

"Lunatic asylum", Georges said, "full of patriots."

The government, he said, had a publicity campaign for the French to drink more of their wine and appealed to their patriotism. After this whenever he mentioned anyone who liked to drink, Georges called him "a patriot." And if anyone looked more than that, "*Very* patriotic."

The asylum was beside us. A cross on top. And all the top windows barred.

"When I was a boy . . . this place made big impression. Before a storm . . . the wind is blowing . . . and the people in lunatic asylum scream. I will never forget."

He drove through empty villages, small towns. He stopped, walked me around, and did some shopping. I noticed that the elaborate war memorials, by the churches, were for the 1914-1918 war. The only acknowledgment of the Second World War was the occasional stone, suddenly appearing in the countryside, at the side of the road, that said three or four members of the Resistance had been shot at this spot.

"I have been to America", Georges said. "I like the Americans. But sometimes they are infantile. Nixon—dustbin. Carter—dustbin."

He drove up a turning by a small, broken, stone bridge that had rocks and uprooted trees on either side. "There is a plateau", he said, "high up. It has many meadows. The water gathers there for many rivers. Once in a hundred years the water very quickly goes down from the plateau to the valley and turns over houses, bridges, trees. Last September a priest on the plateau telephone the Mayor and say the water looks dangerous. But the Mayor, a young man, say it is only an old man talking. Half-hour later the water come down and drown thirty people and took away many houses. It was Sunday so many people were away from the houses otherwise more drown. All happen last September. In a half-hour. But it will not happen for another hundred years. And no one will be here who knows it. The young won't listen. They will, after some years, build houses in the same place. And it will happen all over again."

In one of the large towns he stopped and showed me the cemetery where his family is buried. It was a vault, all stone, no grass around. Nor did any of the others have grass anywhere. On the stone was a vertical tablet with two rows of de Rostaings. The first was born in 1799. "He was town architect." A few names down.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"He had lace factory. . . . He build roads. . . . See how the names become larger as we come nearer today."

"Will you be buried here?"

"No. My wife is Parisian. She is buried in Paris. I will lie with her."

He continued on the main road, then turned off and drove on a dirt road. Then went slowly up a rough slope until he stopped, on the level, by the side of a converted farmhouse.

"We are here", he said.

We were on a height. Below were trees and small fields—different shades of green, yellow and brown. Instead of fences or hedgerows, the fields had their borders in trees. And from this height the trees gave the landscape a 3-D look.

GEORGES INTRODUCED me to Marie-Jo, a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl from the next farm who did the cooking and cleaning during the summer. Short blonde hair, blue eyes, an easy smile. She was shy and tall for her age and walked with a slightly rounded back. While Marie-Jo barbecued salmon steaks at the far end of the porch, under an overhanging chimney, Georges walked me around. In front of the house, under a large elm, was a white table and white chairs. It was very quiet. A light wind on the small leaves of the two near poplars. "They say it will rain", he said. And beside them a border of roses, geraniums, and lobelia.

We ate outside on a white tablecloth. I could hear people talking in the farm below. Further away someone was burning wood. The white smoke rose and thinned as it drifted slowly up. On top of the house was a small stone cross. A larger metal cross was imbedded in the concrete of the front fence.

"I am Catholic", Georges said. "There are Protestants here too. My sister married a Jew. A Pole. From Bialystok."

Marie-Jo brought a round wooden board with cows'- and goats'-cheeses on it. And Georges filled my glass with more red wine.

"When I was young boy of seven we had great distilleries in my country. We hear the Russians are coming. We wait in the street. It is beginning to snow. But I do not want to go home. Many people wait for the Russians.

"Then they come. They look giants with fur hats and big boots and long overcoats. *Very* impressive.

"After a while—what happens? First the women. They say to Russian soldiers—you want drink? They give them drink. A little later, in the street, you see the women wearing the Russian furs for—"

Georges indicated with his hands.

"Muffs", I said.

"Yes, muffs, muffs. The women all have muffs.

"Then the French men give drink. Later, the French men you see in the street—they are wearing the Russian boots.

"The peasants—they *drowned* the Russians."

Marie-Jo brought ripe peaches, large peaches, lovely colours, dark and light, red to crimson. They were juicy and delicious.

"How did your sister meet her husband?"

"At the Sorbonne. My sister always joking. He serious. I did not think they would stay together. When she go to Poland to meet his family we are worried. We Catholic. They Jew. They have two children. Then the war. The Nazis. He is taken away. My mother, a tough woman, get priest and doctor to make fake certificate—say the two boys baptised. But my mother did not think that was enough. She tell me to take the boys to a farmer she know in the Auvergne. I take them. When I meet the farmer I begin to tell story. But the farmer just shake my hand. Say nothing. The children stay with him for the War."

"What happened to the Polish Jew?"

"He died."

We went to have coffee in the barn. The main room of the house. High ceiling with large windows and the original beams. To get to it from the inside you would go up some stairs. But you could walk to it from the garden by going up a grass slope. "All farmers have this for the cattle to go up and down", Georges said.

It was also his studio. On the walls were oil paintings by his uncle who was dead. Impressionist paintings of the landscape around here. "They sell for 40,000 francs", Georges said. "I have about thirty good ones. Some in the flat in Paris, some in the flat in Cannes. A few here." He also had his own paintings—on the wall, and one on an easel—like his uncle's but not as good.

Marie-Jo appeared with a jug full of coffee.

"I am working on book", he said. "I have contract with Paris publisher. Eleven years—I am not finished. It will be traveller's dictionary of every place in world that someone has written."

We had coffee. He lit a cigarette and went over to his record-player.

"Roman—have you heard the Japanese Noh?"

I answered "No" with a movement of my face.

"Very strange. Sounds like a cat . . . and a chain with bucket . . . and a man flogging his wife. I was twenty, a midshipman on cruiser. We visit Japan. Suddenly I was put there, for six hours, listening to this."

He put a record on. "This is the cat . . ." a single note vibrated . . . "looking for another cat. . . ." Georges was standing, talking with gestures. "Now, the long chain with a bucket going down well . . . it needs oil. . . . This is a man flogging his wife. . . ."

He stopped the record.

"The Japanese they are different from the French. They believe the dead are with us all the time."

He showed me a photograph of his wife, Colette.

She looked a determined woman, in her late forties. A strong jaw, thin lips, blonde hair pulled back on her head, light eyes.

"She had beautiful voice", Georges said. "One of the things I like in people is the voice. If they have bad

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

voice it is difficult for me to stay long with them."

"How long is it since she died?"

"Three years."

He must have thought of something else for he said abruptly, "If you do not come into the world—then you cannot go."

He took me for a walk through the countryside. There were all kinds of wild flowers I didn't know and butterflies, and some, like the small black and white, I had not seen before either. But it was the trees that dominated. And I like trees. Probably because I have lived so long in Cornwall facing stone streets and stone terraces.

I wondered why Georges was not curious about my past. He appeared not interested in my personal life. Though I did give him bits of information.

"How long will you be in Dieppe?"

"Two, maybe three days more", I said. "I want to go to England, to a flat I have in Cornwall, and do some work."

IT WAS AFTER NINE, but still light, when we got back to Dieppe. "I know a small place but good", Georges said. And brought me to a restaurant opposite the docks called L'Espérance.

We were both tired and for a while didn't talk. I ordered marinated mackerel, a salad, and some chicken. And Georges ordered a half-melon, veal, and cheese. Also coffee and a bottle of red wine.

Two tables away a man and a woman, both plump, in their late fifties or early sixties, were eating with relish. The woman had a large whole tongue on her plate to start with, the man a tureen of soup. He tucked his napkin into his open-neck shirt. Then they both had fish, then meat with potatoes, then cheese, then a large dessert with whipped cream on top. . . . And all the time they were eating they didn't speak.

Beside them, towards the centre of the restaurant, were two young men. They were deaf and dumb. They were talking with their hands. They also mimed. When they saw us looking they included us in their conversation. One of the men looked Moroccan, with a black moustache on the top lip and down the side of his face. He was lean. And he mimed very quickly and well. He pointed at Georges' cigarette and at my cigarillo. And shook his head. He touched his chest and pretended he was coughing. And shook his head. He then showed himself swimming, the breast-stroke. He was smiling. He showed us that he was also a long-distance walker; getting up and staying in one place, he moved heel and toe, heel and toe, and that curious rotation of the hips.

"Roman", Georges said loudly. "The woman you see is fat. Her husband is fat. Look how they eat. Beside them two men, slim, young. They have to talk with their hands. They look happy—all the time the food comes—they are talking. But the two beside them—they do not talk at all—they concentrate on next bite. If I had movie camera—that is all you need. No words. No explanation. If I was young man, Roman, I would make films."

As he drove me to the hotel, Georges could not forget the scene in the restaurant. On the hotel's front door there was a sign saying it was full.

"Tomorrow", Georges said, "I no see you."

As tomorrow was Sunday I asked him if he was going to church.

"No, I do not like the clergy. The elm tree need spray. They get disease. I know a young man. He will do it. But I have to get him. And I go to see an old friend. He was officer with me. He now alone in Rouen. We eat lunch on Sunday when I am here. Two old men. I see you the day after."

And we shook hands.

NEXT MORNING, I opened the large window of the room. The sun was out. It was warm. A blue sky. After breakfast I decided to go for a walk. I crossed the harbour by an iron bridge. And went up a steep narrow street of close-packed terraced houses. It looked working-class. The houses were small, drab, unpainted. And the sidewalks were narrow and in need of repair. They had red and pink geranium petals that had fallen from the window-boxes on the small balconies.

I passed an upright concrete church with a rounded top. It stood by itself, stark, against the skyline. I went through tall undergrowth and, when clear of it, I saw I was on top of cliffs. They were an impressive sight: white grey, sheer, and at the bottom pebbles with the sea coming in.

I walked along for about an hour, on top of the cliffs, when I noticed the path becoming wider as it started to slope down. The cliffs here went back from the sea and left a small pebbled beach. People were on it.

I was looking at the dirt path as I walked down, because it was uneven and steep, when I saw a shrew, about two inches long, over another shrew lying on its side. The one on its side was flattened as if a roller had gone over it. I watched the head of the live shrew over the belly of the dead one—there didn't seem to be any movement. Then, for no reason, I whistled. The live shrew darted into the grass. And I saw the open half-eaten belly, of the one on its side, a brilliant crimson. The colour was brighter than any meat I had seen at the butcher's.

The small beach wasn't crowded. The surf gentle . . . the water sparkled . . . a family was playing *boules*. Someone was wind-surfing across the length of the beach . . . going one way, then turning the sail to go the other, and often falling in. A man in a T-shirt had a dog, a terrier, on a leash. Then he let him go into the shallows. Under an umbrella a young woman was breast-feeding a baby. Nearer to the water a tall woman

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with white skin and red hair was lying on her back, topless. People were changing, using large coloured towels . . . while the continual sound of the low surf as it came in, breaking over the pebbles and sliding back.

I had brought a picnic: bread, a hard-boiled egg, cheese, tomatoes, a pear. And a can of cider to wash it down. After I had eaten I took off my shirt, shoes, socks, and lay down on the stones.

A loud noise woke me. It was two boys running over the stones between my head and the cliffs. I sat up. I didn't know how long I had been asleep. The surface of the water sparkled. The click of the *boules* was still going. From somewhere a dog was barking. The cliffs, a few yards behind me and on both sides, had light green streaks in the massive white grey. And high up, on the very top, a thin layer of grass.

The tide was coming in. I put on shirt, socks, and shoes, and walked over the pebbles to a paved slope that led from the beach to the road. I could now see a narrow opening between the cliffs. And as I walked up the slope the opening fanned out to show a suburb of houses with gardens, green lawns, and trees. As I came to the top of the paved slope I saw, across the road, on a stone, in French and English.

On this beach
Officers and Men of the
Royal Regiment of Canada
Died at Dawn 19 August 1942
Striving to Reach the Heights Beyond

You who are alive on this beach
remember that these men died far from home
that others here and everywhere might freely
enjoy life in God's mercy.

When I got back to the hotel the "full" sign had been taken down. Madame greeted me with a smile.

"You have caught the sun. I have surprise for you."

She soon reappeared with a thin blonde girl of about twelve or thirteen.

"This is Jean. She is from Canada", Madame said proudly. "From Alberta."

"Where from in Alberta?" I asked.

"Edmonton", the girl replied in a quiet voice.

"How long will you be in Dieppe?"

"I live here. I go to school."

"When were you in Edmonton?"

"Three weeks ago."

"Is your father there?"

"No, he is somewhere else. He travels. I'm with my mother."

"Can you speak French as well as you can English?"

"I can speak it better", she said.

And she was glad to go off with Madame's only daughter, who was older and not as pretty, to roller-skate on the promenade.

"She is charming", Madame said as we watched both girls run to get out.

"I went for a walk today, Madame", I said, "and came to the beach where in the war the Canadians—"

"*Ah.*" She interrupted and shook her head, then raised an arm, in distress or disbelief. She tried to find words—but couldn't.

"I have read many books about it", she said quickly. "Do you want to see the cemetery?"

"No", I said.

That evening, while in the dining-room, I decided to leave tomorrow. For over three weeks I had been travelling in France. All inland, until Dieppe. It had been a fine holiday. I had not been to France before. But now I wanted to get back to the familiar. I was also impatient to get back to work. I had brought with me a large notebook but I had written nothing in it.

I said to Madame at the desk. "I will be leaving tomorrow. Could you have my bill ready?"

"Of course", she said, "you will have it when you come down to breakfast."

"It is a very comfortable hotel. Are you open all year?"

"In December we close."

"Has it been a good season?"

"I think I go bankrupt", she said loudly. "Oil—up three times in two months. It is impossible to go on—" She held up a sheaf of bills.

"I will tell my friends", I said.

"Is kind of you", she said quietly. And gave me several brochures that said the hotel would be running a weekly cookery course in January and February of next year.

LATE NEXT MORNING, with my two cases in the lounge, I was having coffee and smoking a cigarillo, when Georges appeared. He saw the cases.

"Yes", I said. "I'm going today."

"What time is your boat?"

"It goes in an hour."

"I will take you."

He insisted on carrying the cases to his car. Madame came hurrying away from people at the desk to shake my hand vigorously and hoped she would see me again.

While Georges was driving he gave me a card with his address in the country, in Cannes, and in Paris. And the dates he would be there. Then he gave me a large brown envelope. I took out what was in it—a small watercolour of Dieppe that he had painted. It showed the mustard and orange café with people sitting at the outside tables and others walking by. On the back he had written. "For Roman, my new friend, Georges."

"When I get to England", I said, "I will send you one of my books."

"Thank you. I should like to improve my English. Perhaps I find in it something for my traveller's dictionary."

At the ferry I persuaded Georges not to wait.

"Roman, I do not kiss the men."

We shook hands.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I SAT IN A SEAT on deck, at the stern, facing Dieppe. The ferry turned slowly and I saw Dieppe turn as well. The vertical church with the rounded top, the cathedral, the square, the houses with the tall windows, and wooden shutters, and small iron balconies.

Then the ferry straightened out and we were in the open sea. After a while it altered course. And there were the cliffs where I had walked yesterday and the narrow opening. I kept watching the cliffs and the opening. And thought how scared they must have been coming in from the sea and seeing this.

The sun was warm, the sea calm. And when I next looked at the cliffs the opening had disappeared. All that was there was the white grey stone sticking up. I thought of gravestones . . . close together on a slope. . . . You could see nothing else. Just gravestones. And they were gravestones with nothing on them . . . they were all blank. . . .

On the loudspeaker the captain's voice said that coming up on the left was one of the world's largest tankers. People hurried to the rails with their cameras.

I went down to a lower deck and stood in the queue for the duty-free.

Helen's House

Winter has passed.
The winter of her death has passed.
The peonies in the garden have raised their standards;
lily-of-the-valley nudges through last year's litter;
the buckeye buds stand erect like light bulbs;
rhubarb shows leaf, and the old vine looks alert.
But the bird-bath her side of the lawn
is untended now—she intended,
she intended to be here;
I can feel it, feel it. . . .

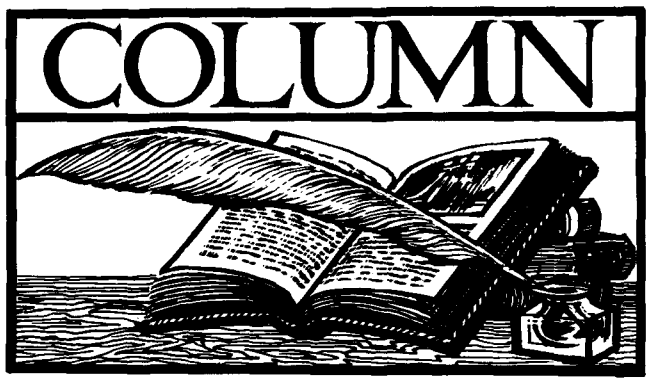
Perhaps that is why I cannot write a poem for her.
It is as though she watched me trying to write it,
wondering how to address me—
Dan, Daniel, Danny—she never knew—
What's that you're doing?
Writing your elegy, Helen.
Oh!
How can I do it?

Each day I stare at her square house,
filled now with tenants,
the house she lived in nearly all her life,
twenty-five years of it on her own, after Dutch died,
knowing that since she was unready to leave,
she is still busying herself inside,
putting things away, checking the locks,
and at night looking out of her window at the lights in ours.
She kept a bell to summon us should anything go wrong.
Silly, isn't it! she apologised.
I insisted it wasn't.

But perhaps she was not so unready.
Perhaps her ghost is not so restless as I imagine.
It seems that as she lay dying in Mercy,
she suddenly asked: What is a haven?
And the one sitting by her bedside explained:
A safe place, Helen.
And she nodded.

Daniel Weissbort

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A FEW WEEKS AGO, I spent the morning in a British Army barracks. It's several decades since I was a serviceman, but not much seemed to have changed. True, the sentry on the gate looked about fifteen; a girl was on duty in the guardroom; and a soldier was drinking coffee in front of a television set. Yet the sentry was smart, the girl tough, and the wall of the TV room the same old painted brick. Everything still smelt of wax, blanco, oil, and metal polish. Daily orders and duty rosters still filled the notice-board. The floor still rang with the clatter of boots. The stock-brick barrack-rooms stood bleak and bare across the parade-ground. Khaki vehicles came and went.

When a sergeant-major appeared, swagger-stick clenched, moustache bristling, he seemed straight from Central Casting; so did two senior officers from the War House, stiff and erect in well-cut mufti, probably from Gieves & Hawkes. A security man from the Ministry of Defence only faintly belied the stereotype: he was young, shy, watchful, and self-contained. Two more people completed the party—an elegant official from another agency, the barracks's Government landlord, and a specialist from the Department of the Environment, the DOE.

What brought us together? Not spies, or bomb attacks, or even public relations for the press. We had come to resolve a minute dilemma: which type of anti-intruder fencing to put on a new perimeter wall. I was there on behalf of civilian neighbours. They, and the Government landlord, liked the look of traditional revolving spikes or *chevaux de frise*. The DOE man had found nobody making them: for Buckingham Palace they'd had to be custom-built. He therefore preferred a ready-made modern version in shiny white metal, rather like spacecraft antennae. The Army simply wanted a decision.

We spent several hours inspecting the existing wall, parts of it sagging in near-collapse. Some members of the party scrambled up to peer over it; the less athletic put their heads on one side and rubbed their chins. After beating the bounds from inside, we trudged around the outside, trying to imagine how the new defences might look. How did the professionals see them? As deterring youthful vandals, or keeping out the IRA? No one seemed certain. Nothing, confessed the security man, could stop a really determined assault. Permanent patrols were too labour-intensive, electronic devices too costly. The choice was between the mass-produced gizmo and specially ordered *chevaux de frise*. At that point, diffidently, I asked what seemed the obvious question: how much would the rival systems cost? There was a pause, and everyone looked uncomfortable. *No one had bothered to find out.* They didn't even know the price of the space-age fencing whose leaflet we'd all been shown.

I thought of that morning when I picked up Clive Ponting's book *Whitehall: Tragedy and Farce*.[1] He, you may remember, was the youngish Ministry of Defence official tried and acquitted under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act for passing to the Labour MP Tam Dalyell some documents on the sinking of the *Belgrano* in the Falklands War. He told his version of that story in a previous volume, *The Right to Know*. The present work contains his thoughts on the inadequacies of the British civil-service system, which he's now left after fifteen years.

To be honest, I began with some prejudice against Clive Ponting. Having been a civil servant myself, albeit an international one, I recognise that rules are needed, however idiotic, and that those who break them, however righteously, have to face the consequences. The best Eurocrats I know are constantly cutting corners and risking their necks. The same may be true in the British civil service. But if the policies one's applying become really unpalatable, the honourable course is surely to quit. To betray a trust, and then prevaricate, seems less proper, understandable though it may be. I'm not saying that Mr Ponting and his family haven't suffered grievously from his doing what he believed to be right. All I'm slightly deploring is the odour of sanctity left on the affair by some of the press, and strengthened by the author's photograph on the jacket of his book.

HAVING READ IT, I feel much more indulgent. Give or take some repetition, a few misprints, and a solecism or two ("protagonist" instead of "champion", "media" as a singular noun), Clive Ponting writes trenchantly and well. Much of his ammunition comes from the Crossman and Castle diaries; but he supplements it with personal experience and analysis; and many of his conclusions coincide with those of an *ad hoc* committee chaired by Sir John Hoskyns, former head of the Prime Minister's own think-tank.[2]

Mr Ponting's starting-point is Britain's relative economic decline. This, he points out,

> "has produced the major political problem of reconciling public expectation of continual improvement with the reality that the resources are not available. Persistent failure to solve this problem has produced a deep public pessimism about the political process and the future of Britain."

Amen to that; but what does he mean by "this problem"? The decline, or the failure to persuade the public to accept its results? A better civil-service and government machine might marginally improve Britain's economic prospects; but

---

[1] *Whitehall: Tragedy and Farce*. By CLIVE PONTING. Hamish Hamilton, £9.95.

[2] *Re-skilling Government*. By PETER HENNESSY, GRAHAM MATHER, NORMAN STRAUSS, and WILLIAM WALLACE. Institute of Directors (116 Pall Mall, London SW1), £2.95, plus 35p postage.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the real remedies are surely investment, enterprise, and European-scale ventures. As for persuading people to accept austerity, example might be better than public relations. Altogether, in fact, Mr Ponting tends to share the typical Whitehall view that Whitehall holds the key to most of the nation's problems. Self-importance is the civil servant's—and the journalist's—occupational disease.

That said, the public sector does involve a large slice of Britain's wealth. How large remains uncertain, even to Mr Ponting's readers. On one page (p. 120) he declares:

> "The artificiality of the system was shown in 1976 when the existing way of defining public expenditure meant that it amounted to nearly 60% of the gross domestic product. This was thought for political reasons to be too high. So the definition was simply altered and public expenditure suddenly made up only 46% of the gross domestic product. But nothing has changed in the real world."

Later, on p. 236, this 46% has become 45%. Still, whatever the figure, Mr Ponting vividly shows how much it's subject to a political tug-of-war. Departments fight for more resources, sometimes even proposing concessions in the hope of avoiding cuts. No tactics work against the implacable Treasury, which welshes on provisional agreements, pockets voluntary offerings, and then asks for more. In Cabinet, battles royal may be fought over minor but sensitive issues, while huge expenditure items go by on the nod.

MR PONTING would like to reform this system in a number of ways. First, as he rightly points out, Ministers are absurdly overworked. Anyone who has even scanned Richard Crossman's diaries will have noticed how often the Minister "rushed" here or there; any reader of Barbara Castle's still more revealing text will remember her reading the contents of her red boxes late into the night. Few human frames, and little long-term judgment, can hope to survive such frenzy. The Hoskyns group suggests a continental *cabinet* system to spread the load; Mr Ponting proposes devolving much administration to separate agencies.

Equally distressing, to a civil-service temperament, is the haphazard way in which politics intervenes. Instead of central strategic planning, Government too often seems to involve cosmetic shifts and patched-up compromise—shady trade-offs between constituency interests and broader national concerns. Personally, I share Clive Ponting's tidy-minded distaste for such shenanigans; but "in the real world", as he likes to put it, conflict and competition are inescapable. Decisions that ignored them would be artificially Olympian, merely delaying trouble by pretending it didn't exist. So, although the squabbles revealed in the Castle and Crossman diaries look squalid, I don't myself believe that civil-service reform could prevent them. The best one might hope for is a counterpart to the European Commission, proposing policy on behalf of the general interest, but leaving decisions to the men and women with dirty hands. The real trouble with the Central Policy Review Staff was surely that it *reviewed* policy rather than previewing it. But this is a subject Mr Ponting doesn't deeply explore.

What does seem to affront him is the continued rule of the generalists at the top. He quotes the Fulton Report as condemning "amateurism", and convincingly shows how financial or technical ignoramuses can make fools of themselves. But he reserves special animus for what he calls "good chaps", those "sound" men from public school and Oxbridge whom he regards as the main villains of the piece. Having known quite a few of them, I suppose my testimony is suspect; but nearly all have struck me as proof against Mr Ponting's imputations. They know the "real world", having hobnobbed with its denizens: some have been recruited by it when they've reached retiring age. Despite their background, they're neither snobbish nor self-satisfied; and their intellectual grasp is amazingly swift. Clive Ponting proposes that the three top grades in the civil service should no longer be the top of the promotion ladder, rapidly reached by such high flyers; instead, he thinks, the top men should be recruited from outside for five-year stints. Myself, I find this unconvincing. Recent appointments from outside, notably to nationalised industries, have produced equivocal results. Interviews are notoriously fallible as a selection procedure; examinations are somewhat better; but the record on the job is the real test. And if the top perches were privatised some of the best people in the civil service, deprived of future kudos, influence, salary, and "K"s, would surely desert it at the first tempting offer, leaving it impoverished, and with unknown quantities in charge.

BUT IF THESE parts of Clive Ponting's thesis call for more careful discussion, it's hard to dissent from his two fundamental points. One is that Whitehall is absurdly secretive. The other is that it neurotically resists change.

The secrecy, too, is perhaps neurotic. The tone of instructions to new Ministers, and to civil servants giving evidence to Select Committees, sounds almost prurient, a Mother Superior distastefully mentioning sex.

> "Once information has been supplied to a Committee it becomes 'evidence'. . . . The risk of publication . . . must be taken into account in deciding what it is prudent to make available even within authorised categories."

So much for freedom of information. The whole attitude appears to be that policy-making is too private to be discussed with those whom it affects and who pay all these pompous keep-mumsters. It's like living in Renaissance Venice—except that we're snowed with press releases and Ministerial leaks. And although successive Oppositions promise to abolish Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, what happens when they become Governments? Do you really need to ask?

If you do, the answer is the same as to the question "What happens to all proposals for civil-service reform?" First, they're warmly welcomed. In principle. As a desirable goal. In the long term. Of course, they need to be examined. Carefully. In the light of departmental experience. To evaluate how they can be applied. To particular circumstances. When the time is ripe. Meanwhile, as a first step.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let us see. How the new system shapes up. Or shakes down. Within the necessary limits. To be reviewed in the course of time. As a matter of practical administration. Within the required parameters. And given the necessary resources. So I think we can all agree. A most valuable contribution. And a very sound compromise. Which augurs well for the future. To get on with the job. Realistic, after all.

One after another, the assailants have come a cropper: the Fulton Committee, the Michael English Committee, the Franks Committee, the Croham Directive, the Rayner exercise—even the Thatcher "cuts." In 1978, a former member of the Property Services Agency, Leslie Chapman, published a hilarious book on civil-service wastefulness, *Your Disobedient Servant*. He'd found things like empty warehouses heated as if they were offices; he'd recommended economies, and received the following reply:

> "I write to acknowledge your letter and enclosures of 20 December to Sir William Armstrong. These have been read with interest."

The Rayner exercise was Mrs Thatcher's valiant effort to kick Whitehall into greater cost-consciousness—bringing the man from Marks & Spencer's to strike sparks off the mandarins. Clive Ponting was involved in it; and, as he shows, it was a very partial success.

I DON'T SUPPOSE that his book, or the Hoskyns group's report, will have much greater impact. Too many chips on too many shoulders; too many chinks in the critics' armour; too many good chaps who are good at logic-chopping and keeping us in the dark. The fact is, of course, that freedom of information would assist reform. It would also, paradoxically, reveal the vast majority of officials to be diligent, scrupulous, hard-working, and loyal. Leslie Chapman's and Clive Ponting's worst stories are no more typical of the whole civil service than my wasted morning in the barracks. But then it's where the shoe pinches that it needs to be fixed.

M

Piano

We never heard it play, although we knew,
Like so much else, it had seen better days,
Had known a lighter touch than we could show,
Been peddled as an instrument of praise;
Had lifted someone's parlour clean above
Their dingily Victorian concerns,
Disconsolate with moonlight, sick with love,
Impassioned and uproarious by turns.
Our front room proved its final resting place,
Untended on the cold linoleum,
A monument to disappointed grace,
A casualty, its gloomy kingdom come.
We broke it up one winter afternoon
With long, unwieldy hammers and a saw,
Enjoyed it too, the sudden bearing down
On all that had been sacrosanct before;
The polished top, the pale, discoloured keys,
The unexpected patternings of wire,
Sweet music and its sad redundancies
Cut down to size and ready for the fire.
Three weeks it took to burn and every night
A little more was picked up with the coal
Or balanced on the paper in the grate
To crack and spit abruptly down the scale.
The legs we saved till last, their stubborn fuel
Was resinous, reluctant, slicked with tar,
The lions carved on them motionless until
The downdraft took them upwards with a roar.

John Levett

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tocqueville & Gobineau

On Race, Revolution & Despair—By MAX BELOFF

THE confrontation of ideas in the latter half of the 20th century takes place largely in public, at conferences of various kinds which rely on the modern intelligentsia's demand (and need) for subsidised travel, and in "letters to the editor." A hundred and fifty years ago, half-way between the era of the *salon* and the era of the conference, such confrontations were largely private, by way of personal correspondence. These exchanges have furnished a still unexhausted mine to generations of historians. Alexis de Tocqueville has been particularly rewarding in this respect, since he spent much of his time away from Paris and since many of his correspondents were foreigners. Arthur de Gobineau was not, but he was a professional diplomat and the exchange of ideas and criticism between himself and Tocqueville had perforce to be carried out largely by letter. Posterity is the gainer.[1]

The earliest group of letters (of the years 1843-44) deals with a projected study by Tocqueville of recent trends in moral philosophy, particularly in relation to social and political questions. In this work Gobineau was to assist by making enquiries into certain aspects of legislation in different countries, and by summarising the work of recent writers, particularly in England. The letters already show a marked difference of approach. For Tocqueville, the moral truths now being increasingly embodied in legislation were only the development of a core of traditional morality, basically Christian, that had survived substantially unchanged into the modern age. Gobineau believed there had been a radical departure. He believed that the most important thing was that people now accepted the possibility of a morality without the faith that had sustained it previously.

> "Here, *monsieur*, lies to me the vast element of mediocrity in the moral principle of Christianity. Making everything rest on faith, all the other spiritual and mental powers were dismissed as relatively insignificant; deprived of their absolute importance, lost among the brilliance attributed to faith alone, they were easily forgotten or, rather, misused. The great concern has been salvation, and salvation could not be gained anywhere but in cavernous retreats where, without temptations and without social duties, there were few opportunities to be helpful to one's fellow men. I think it could be said finally with much justice that Christian morality restricts itself more or less to the avoidance of doing harm and that it hardly exceeds this limit. . . ." (8 September 1843)

This new view had important consequences, first in the sphere of toleration:

> "As soon as one's beliefs in a future life are recognised as being wholly inconsequential to one's actions or duties in this life it becomes difficult for a magistrate to find a pretext to intervene in the quarrels of sects. Here we have already a great and fortunate innovation due to the spirit of our age."

But there were other changes too.

> "As people have become less preoccupied with their future lives they have been thinking more of their present ones. To be exclusively preoccupied with this earthly life used to be the mark of men of levity or of passionate and vehement ambitions. Any soul blessed with gentleness turned towards matters of worship, and this earth was thus forsaken by the minds of those who were most capable of serving it usefully. Of course many of the economists of the last century and many of those utopian philosophers who preceded or succeeded Rousseau border on the ridiculous. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that these often so unduly exalted thinkers have marked their usefulness in history by having helped to establish that clearer order of ideas by which we live today. It was about the middle of the 18th century, under the influence of Voltairian ideas, that men began to ask whether it was not possible to give something more than poorhouses to the lower classes. For the first time they studied the exact nature of charity, its eventual purpose and its attainments. Thereafter came those often more enthusiastic than judicious studies about agriculture, about money, about financial circulation, about the nature of wealth, about the sources of its decrease or increase. These early efforts lost much popular esteem since many of the theories were silly, foolish, and pretentious. Yet we ought not to forget that they marked

[1] For an English edition of the correspondence, see Tocqueville, *The European Revolution: Correspondence with Gobineau*, edited and translated by John Lukacs (Doubleday, 1959). There is also an edition of the original letters by M. Degros, with a valuable introduction by J.-J. Chevallier, which forms Vol. IX of the *Oeuvres Complètes* (ed. J. P. Mayer, Gallimard, 1959). The extracts given here are in the Lukacs translation.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the beginning of a new order of things in the world. . . ."

"To the different duties already imposed on the government another one was to be added, a more august one, never mentioned before. The State was to look after the poor. . . ."

"*Everyone has an equal right to work.* Is this not a new maxim, quite different from that of Christ, who said, after Moses: *Man is condemned to work*? What used to be a painful duty becomes a right, a prerogative in the name of which each member of the social body has the right not to suffer from misery and destitution. The power and dignity which morality has gained by this principle are beyond question."

Manual labour is now recognised as equally honourable with intellectual work.

"From this new perception of the occupations of the lower classes results a principle, not entirely unknown to Christianity but one to which our times are giving a much broader and greater application: the right of the poor to education. The necessity to enlighten the masses is today hardly contested at all. And not only the basic principles of religion are to be taught them, but they are to be introduced to scientific and literary progress as far as possible; in brief, they are called forth to share all the fruits of the human intellect."

Tocqueville, deeply traditionalist and deeply conscious of the historical service rendered by the Christian tradition, could not accept these views, although he was not by this date (as he later became) himself a believer. For him the change was in the circumstances of its application, not in the code itself.

THE NEXT CONTACT between the two men was when Gobineau served as Tocqueville's *chef de cabinet* in 1849. Neither the correspondence of that time nor Gobineau's very interesting letters when he was an attaché in Berne relate to the main theme of the two men's contrasting philosophies. For this it was necessary to await the publication in 1853 of the first two volumes of Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. Here Gobineau expounded the first coherent philosophy of race. The human species was made up of separate races—superior and inferior: where the superior ruled, civilisation flourished; where they mingled, civilisation would decay. The inferior races would absorb and corrupt the higher ones. Since this was now happening universally, civilisation was doomed to irremediable decadence.

Tocqueville was quite out of sympathy with the whole direction of Gobineau's thought.

"I never concealed from you that I am greatly prejudiced against what seems to be your principal idea, which, I must confess, to me seems to belong to the group of materialistic theories. Moreover, it is one of its most dangerous members, for it applies fatalism not merely to individuals but to those perennial conglomerations of individuals called races." (11 October 1853)

In a later letter, in reply to Gobineau's defence of his position, he returned to the charge.

"I must frankly tell you that you have not convinced me. Every one of my objections persists. You may, none the less, be right in defending yourself from the charge of materialism. Your doctrine is rather a sort of fatalism, of predestination, if you wish but, at any rate, very different from that of St Augustine, from the Jansenists, and from the Calvinists (the very last are closest to your doctrines), since you tie predestination and matter closely together. You constantly speak about races regenerating or degenerating, losing or acquiring through an infusion of new blood social capacities which they have not previously had. (I think these are your own words.) I must frankly say that, to me, this sort of predestination is a close relative of the purest materialism.

And be assured that should the masses, whose reasoning always follows the most beaten track, accept your doctrines, it would lead them straight from races to individuals and from social capacities to all sorts of potentialities.

Whether the element of fatality should be introduced into the material order of things, or whether God willed to make different kinds of men so that He imposed special burdens of race on some, withholding from them a capacity for certain feelings, for certain thoughts, for certain habits, for certain qualities—all this has nothing to do with my own concern with the practical consequences of these philosophical doctrines. The consequences of both theories is that of a vast limitation, if not a complete abolition, of human liberty. Thus I confess that after having read your book I remain, as before, opposed in the extreme to your doctrines. I believe that they are probably quite false; I know that they are certainly very pernicious." (17 November 1853)

Quite apart from the pernicious results of such a doctrine, Tocqueville believed that it was not possible to give it scientific proof. But for Tocqueville, a practical philosopher, the truth of a doctrine was not for long separable from the consequences attending on belief in it.

"The last century had an exaggerated and somewhat childish trust in the control which men and peoples were supposed to have of their own destinies. It was the error of those times; a noble error, after all; it may have led to many follies, but it also produced great things, compared to which we shall seem quite small in the eyes of posterity. The weary aftermath of revolutions, the weakening of passions, the miscarriage of so many generous ideas and of so many great hopes have now led us to the opposite extreme. After having felt ourselves capable of transforming ourselves, we now feel incapable of reforming ourselves; after having had excessive pride, we have now fallen into excessive self-pity; we thought we could do everything, and now we think we can do nothing; we like to think that struggle and effort are henceforth

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

useless and that our blood, muscles, and nerves will always be stronger than our will-power and courage. This is really the great sickness of our age; it is very different from that of our parents. Irrespective of your argument, your book supports these tendencies; despite yourself, it promotes the spiritual lassitude of your already weakening contemporaries." (20 December 1853)

GOBINEAU WAS ENABLED to indulge his growing passion for Near Eastern and Asian studies by being sent on a mission to Persia, where his observations were characterised by a mixture of shrewdness of perception and wilful dogmatism.

Meanwhile Tocqueville was working on the first volume of his projected study of the French Revolution, published in June 1856, as *L'Ancien Régime*. Once again, the two men found themselves deeply divided. Tocqueville, although aware of the dangers of the centralisation that had created the modern state, believed that liberty could only be safeguarded now by the development of democratic rule. For Gobineau, democracy was a pitiful illusion, the tyranny of the unfit; the only true liberty had been that of medieval feudalism. Indeed, it was because feudal Europe had been Christian that Gobineau had abandoned his original materialism. He had also drawn more pessimistic conclusions than Tocqueville from the Revolution of 1848.

"Since I have not merely visualised but actually seen the revolution, those dirty shirts disgusted me so much and led me to so exaggerate, if you wish, my notions of what is just and what is true that, had I not been married, I should have been capable of becoming a monk in order to take the diametrically opposed road." (29 November 1856)

He could not understand how Tocqueville, after tracing so well the development of monarchical absolutism, could not follow his assessment of its consequences.

"But because all of this is so clear to me and because you have made it even more evident, allow me to ask you what it is that you find so admirable in the Constituent Assembly of 1789? They did not invent any of the ideas that are commonly attributed to them. You make this brilliantly clear. They only precipitated the ruin of those who had resisted the final affirmation of those ideas of which you yourself certainly do not approve. These ideas would have come about in any case, in a gradual manner, and their complete application was inevitable. What these gentlemen did was to open the door to violence and to every democratic atrocity. Could they even erect a temporary dam before the torrential elements which they let loose? Not at all. After remaining in session for two years, they arrived at the sorriest lucubrations which the world has ever seen, at an inapplicable constitution; they then dissolved while committing the grossest blunders which a political body has ever committed in history."

The point was that Tocqueville (unlike Gobineau), for all his disgust with the materialist ideas of the Second Empire, did not despair. Given his fundamental optimism, there could be no real sympathy for Gobineau's ideas.

"I ask you to permit me, my dear friend, to discuss your political theories no longer. Not being able to maintain the liberties which existed five hundred years ago, you prefer that we maintain none. Good. Afraid of submitting to the despotism of parties under which it is possible at least to defend, in speech and in the Press, one's own dignity and one's own freedom, you prefer to be oppressed directly by one single individual at a time, but so absolutely that no one, yourself no more than anyone else, could say a single word." (24 January 1857)

And again, in the same letter:

"You profoundly distrust mankind, at least *our* kind; you believe that it is not only decadent but incapable of ever lifting itself up again. Our very physical constitution, according to you, condemns us to servitude. It is, then, very logical that, to maintain at least some order in such a mob, government of the sword and even of the whip seem to have some merit in your eyes. Still, I do not think that you would offer your own bare back in order to render personal confirmation of your principles. For myself, I do not think that I have either the right or the inclination to entertain such opinions about my race and my country. I believe that one should not despair of them. To me, human societies, like persons, become something worth while only through their use of liberty. I have always said that it is more difficult to stabilise and to maintain liberty in our new democratic societies than in certain aristocratic societies of the past. But I shall never dare to think it impossible."

IN THE PERSPECTIVE of time, the antithesis between Tocqueville's ideas and Gobineau's has remained unresolved. On the whole the advantage where dark, doom-laden prophecy is concerned has lain with Gobineau.

The essential core of his thinking was, as Tocqueville rightly perceived, a determinist one—and to substitute, for the determinism of racial destiny, a determinism in relation to social classes was not so big a step as it might seem, partly because the temperamental factors that might lead to an acceptance of one or other case are identical, and partly also because (as Gobineau's writings show) there is a point at which the idea of race and the idea of class are difficult to separate. What Gobineau wanted was a natural aristocracy, and he thought it could be defined in biological terms. On the other hand, these ideas when used as a basis for action have always produced catastrophe.

In the end, humanity returns saddened but wiser to Tocqueville's tempered optimism. His criticism of Gobineau remains the best foundation for criticising Gobineau's successors, whether in theory or in action.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Poole

Eight pages from the life of Li Po

I.

A breeze disturbs the cherry-blossom.
Birds twang beneath the leaves,
plucked by nothing, or air.
Her scarlet gown billowing out,
she flames like a dragon.
My bright, my planetary child.
How simple the world is, how vast!
I drink light like wine.

II.

I travel among strange books.
White tiger, black leopard prowl
the thickets of my mind.
Words fall from me easily
as leaves from autumn branches.
This young man writes prettily.
"The Empress Wu's crannied neck
twists from lover to lover."

III.

Blood on the rein: the distant hills
like smoke against the sky.
What is she to you?
demanded the man from Kuang-han
before I skewered him prettily.
He will demand nothing now.
—Let snakes invade my garden:
still the birds eat from my hand.

IV.

Your skin is white as white jade,
and green jade your eyes.
Your touch is rain falling
on the flanks of Mount O-mi
in the province of Szechwan.
Your thighs are willow-boughs brushing
a startled sky. (I swear I've drunk
less than fifty wine-cups today.)

Li Po, *arguably China's greatest poet, was born in 701: probably in what is now the province of Szechwan. Wu Hou was Empress; but she abdicated in 705 and the T'ang dynasty was restored. It is said that Li's mother named him "Po" or "The Bright" because she dreamt at his birth of Chang-Kêng, the planet Venus. At 14 he was reading "strange books" and writing "fu." In 720 Su-Ting, lately Chief Minister, saw some of the young man's verses and predicted a great future for him. At the age of 19 he left home and took up residence with a Taoist recluse; according to his own account he kept thousands of rare birds, which ate from his hand. It is impossible to say which was the more intense—his passion for poetry or his passion for wine. A fine swordsman, he took upon himself in early manhood the role of "hsieh", or knight-errant dedicated to avenging those (usually women or minors) unable or unwilling to get legal redress for wrongs done to them. He married for the first time about 726.*

Li Po is unique among great Chinese poets of the period in never having been offered an official post—though it was not for the want of trying. His capacity for wine, no doubt, had something to do with this. It certainly affected his duty as a husband. His life was characterised by periods of wandering.

In the summer of 742 he climbed the T'ai-shan, the highest mountain in eastern China. He claimed that he rode up on a white deer—as several Taoist Immortals were supposed to have done. His inability to accept the cup of Liquid Mist offered to him by fairy maidens signifies his unreadiness to put aside wordly ambitions and embrace the reclusive life.

In the same year he arrived at Ch'ang-an, the capital, where he added himself to a pool of court poets. But the coveted post did not materialise, and he left in 744.

In the last days of 756, Prince Lin, the Emperor's 16th son, set sail down the Yangtze River with the apparent intention of establishing an independent régime in the Yangtze delta. Stopping in the New Year at KiuKiang, he found Li Po there and invited him on board as a sort of expeditionary laureate. When Lin was captured and executed, the poet was thrown into prison. Music and wine appear to have done little to raise his spirits. Released in autumn, he was promptly banished to Yeh-lang. Before he got there, however, a general amnesty was announced, and he returned to eastern China.

He died in 762. Legend has it that, drinking in a boat, he tried to grasp hold of the moon's reflection, fell overboard, and drowned. The truth is probably less poetic.

R.P.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

V.

My verses like the brown Yangtze flow
easily to the sound of drum and fife.
A breeze fills the sail. Prince Lin
is munificent, his fingers drip
gold. The tankard passes round
upon a green jade platter.
At my waist Dragon Pool,
sheathed, dreams of Tartar blood.

VI.

There is nothing in my heart but
perpetual autumn. The days fall like leaves.
Kung conversed with linnets till his feet
became winged: but I shall not fly.
My gaolers are civil men,
but you are not here.
I write letters, get none.
My cup brims with sorrow.

VII.

A lifetime of loving things: verse, wine,
women, song, the sword, friends, the moon
adrift in sky, or water—
and the stars, beyond me.
Have I loved too much?
—When I climbed the T'ai-shan
mounted on a white deer
I could not drink the cup of Mist.

VIII.

Full moon over the pine-trees.
The wine-cup holds a round of light.
To enter into this mirror,
to take possession of myself,
I must become sheer nothing.
Cicadas drum in the grasses.
The world is gently rocking.
I drink wine like light.

Lawrence Sail

Reichert's Leap

Each hopeless stitch homemade—the futile skin
Out of which he would jump. It's too late now,
Even if he wanted, as surely he must be wanting,
To climb down. He crouches on the cold brow
Of madness, on the parapet's fine brink,
His breath smearing the air, an unused silence
Which might have been saving speech. *Here, what do you think?*
I didn't mean it. Of course. It makes no sense.
Or simply, *We'll have a drink and then I'll go*
To embrace my poor wife and children. Later, we'll chat.
Too late. They say the journalists wouldn't throw
Their story out of the window, and that was that.
He shifts like a bird—ridiculous, he fears.
Go on, you're chicken. He cannot, will not stay
For this. A puff of looping breath. The sheer
Drop. The stupid tower begins to sway
In his mind only. A final shuffle and
A plop as into water. The deficient air
Fails to support him. A heavy black duster lands,
Bundles into the ground. Lies there.
Men in caps. Fuss. A canvas shroud.
A way elbowed through the encroaching crowd.

Which of us, from our tower, would not recall
This brute parabola of pride and fall?—
Late Romantics, fledgling birdmen all.

(In December 1911, a self-employed tailor, Walter Reichert, attempted to fly from the Eiffel Tower)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES & TOPICS

All the Queen's Men

Of Princes, Sirs, & Serfs—By EDWARD PEARCE

TO LOOK AT the British popular press during a Royal event is at all times a depressing experience. Judgment seems suspended, and self-respect with it. From the day of the Queen's accession, when she was trumpeted as "Our Wonderful Young Queen", to the latest grovelling coverage of "Fergie", the young lady who is to marry Prince Andrew, we have been unable to talk about Royalty with intelligence, restraint, or moderation.

The fault is not simply with the wrapping-paper tabloids or indeed with the printed word. The British Broadcasting Corporation, often quite reasonably accused of a certain snide Leftishness, or at least of Liberal primness in its TV coverage, behaved on this occasion like a footman invited upstairs. The commercial TV news (ITN) was no better. Alastair Burnet unctuously interviewed the couple, addressing the unremarkable young man throughout as "Sir." Burnet is in his late sixties, the prince forty years younger, yet this grotesquerie was not remarked on. *Twenty minutes out of twenty-five* were devoted to the Royal engagement by the BBC before it turned to "the rest of the news"—Beirut, the South African townships, the world.

On occasions like this, anyone visiting from Mars or from a saner political system would suppose that we had undergone a collective operation to remove the brain. Royalty are profoundly unimportant people. They survive in Europe as titular heads of state, ceremonial knobs on the tops of sticks. There is no very great objection against their survival as hereditary presidents. In fairness to him, the present Prince of Wales is showing a decency, even a kind of covert liberality, which is very likeable and touching, though it is beyond my understanding how he too should be "Sir" even to the most servantly television personages. But the performances in recent years of such non-executive Presidents as Richard von Weizsäcker and Francesco Cossiga suggest talents and qualities unlikely to turn up in the House of Hanover in the next hundred years.

It can be argued that we have Royalty as a species of anaesthesia, that they are no worse (and no better) as public objects than the stars of *Dallas* or *Dynasty*. Personally, I have never been any better able to sit in front of a TV set and watch through an episode of that darling trash than to endure the faldiddle of a Royal procession, whether to St Paul's, Frogmore, or the Ascot racecourse. For this citizen, both institutions represent a humiliation of the intelligence, nauseous lollipops not to be sucked upon. But that is my own frugal view—and if people want a little flash and ceremony together with that sham medievalism, most of which was dreamed up in the age of the Romantic historical novel when Sir Walter Scott and Harrison Ainsworth were glamorising the past and Lord Eglinton was holding his joust in the rain, they are certainly entitled to indulge.

Unfortunately, the institution of monarchy impinges on other things. There is talk about its being "above politics." But the pageant, the crook-kneed coverage in the press, and the quite indescribably sickening books which are written about them do have a political impact. If Windsor is Tinsel Town, this Dream Factory tends to keep people in a state of sottish content. We are supposed to watch the dull doings of an emblematic family distinguished only by the props of another century and the accumulated cash and real estate of two-and-a-half. We are supposed to admire them and be respectful; and, by and large, respectful the British are. If this condition of respect for one's financial and lineal betters had no "political" implications, then no cause ever had effect.

Not that Royalty are so significantly neutral in their dealings. The Queen's consort does not hesitate to lecture businessmen about business and workers about their work; though the high point of this man's achievement since leaving the Navy in his late twenties may well have been his mastery of the art of driving a coach-and-pair through sticks. Once, wonderfully, on a factory tour he was confronted by a shop-floor proletarian who observed, "You're the fellow that does no work." For the most part, however, the British can be counted on to say that the Royals do a wonderful job and that they wouldn't have that responsibility for anything. They have been told in a thoroughly Orwellian way that they think the Queen is wonderful; and, roughly and readily, they think as they have been told.

THERE IS A monstrous failure of judgment here, a Pavlovian acceptance of instructed behaviour. And it is not lightly achieved. I have no formal analysis of the Royal share of news coverage, but it is enormous and recurring. Every

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trivial episode is guaranteed lead-status in the populars, and heavy reverence in every quality paper except *The Guardian*. When Prince Charles recently quite badly hurt his finger, we had saturation coverage. The British run less of a liberal democracy than they think. The coverage afforded to Royal doings of the most quotidian sort is the kind reserved for heads of state in highly undemocratic states. The razzmatazz laid on in his lifetime for Tito in Yugoslavia was partly meant to assuage his personal vanity, but it was also a conscious decision by a former subject and soldier of Franz Josef to work the old Habsburg propaganda-machine. The Perons and the Marcos family, to say nothing of the Ceausescus, have all been into the adoration game.

These were all, in their lamentable, dark ways, sleazy disreputable dictators. Our Royal Family is wholesome and good, rather unimaginative Berkshire gentry with a passion for gymkhanas, and blessed with genes going back to Gorm the Old. What is practised in their name is still a cult of personality even though they are neither enriched nor made politically powerful by it. Isn't adulation of any person, pop group, block or stone a condition of mind we should be out of? There is something wrong, even hopelessly unworthy, in a traffic whose currency is the trivial happenings in the lives of symbolic people, however reputable. It isn't grown-up. We are supposed to be free men, yet we are skilfully crafted and conditioned into behaving like spaniels.

Such a state of affairs could be justified, though not lightly, if according to some pessimistic philosophy we derived a stability and orderliness of life from these icons. We don't. That dubious and dangerous argument, which could also be recruited for the totalitarian cause, simply doesn't apply. The things which are wrong with contemporary Britain—vandalism, violence, the collapse in the functioning of our schools, diminished literacy and incremental street-nastiness—are quantitively worse than anything to be found in West Germany or in France, two republican countries which sustain themselves on a combination of material competence, success, and (especially in the case of France) a huge sense of national identity.

Little Britain, by contrast, has the worst sporting violence in Europe; its streets are dirty, its subways dirtier; there are more vagrants, more criminals, more people living lives of damnable ignorance, futility, and emptiness. Ernest Bevin's remark about his own class and "the terrible poverty of its ambitions" is probably even truer now than when he made it.

If Royalty could be justified in principle as an annealing and uplifting force, it cannot be so justified by its performance. The flag flies at the Castle mast and great parts of our cities are moonscapes of secondary dereliction. Royalty becomes for many people an illusion of stability, not its cause. We are pulling hard on that lollipop, refusing to acknowledge that the Royal operation currently installed was the spin-off of commercial and colonial success in the 18th and early 19th centuries. For all the Busby Berkeley routines and stage management, Royalty, at any rate *our sort of Royalty*, is a top-heavy and absurdly lavish adornment to a tatty and diminished fabric.

You can have Royalty or not have it, but the difference will lie only in appearances. It is an elaborate bluff connived at and/or devotedly swallowed by the media. Does Sir Alastair Burnet, lit by the day-glo aura which knighthood confers upon a journalist, believe every word of it and think them wonderful? Perhaps the cool rather radical souls at *Newsnight* have their reservations, but know the impossibility of speaking out-of-turn against such a national cult of personality.

Royalty will neither be mocked nor investigated outside small-circulation journals. Since this is the only platform such opinions will get, let me go a little further. My own ideal government is close to the notions of the Enlightenment. A republic of free men (of what George Orwell called "the free intelligence"), in which they address their problems without reference to magic—one in which no priesthood, religious or secular, and no irrational cult intrudes—seems a better framework to live in than the sycophantic world of kingship, gilt harness, and high-price legerdemain.

Even so, I can see a perfectly good case for the Scandinavian model of monarchy—fatuously mocked here as "Kings on bicycles", as if Kings in landaus were somehow more rational. The British would not thank you for saying so, but Scandinavia, late and vigorously, took to democracy far less compromisingly than Britain, where we still have this twitch of old-time servility in us.

In my view we need new institutions uncoupled from the awful old hierarchical British thing. A reasonable transition would take the form of a Scandinavian monarchy—more frugal, out of the limelight, eschewing the glitzy trickiness of the present public circus. As decent and upright a young man as the Prince of Wales might not be entirely closed to such a notion. Royalty has adapted before, is indeed as strong as it is because of this shrewd facility. They will do us all a favour by adapting in a way which takes them out of the Big Top and applying themselves to the interests of people beyond the circle of the rich and inheriting. It is not their fault that they sit atop the traditional British class pyramid. But hideous it is, and there can be no merit in any head of state acting as the alibi of the privileged and the inspiration of the socially aspiring.

Queen Charlotte's Ball (where the débutantes of the year would curtsy to a cake) is no longer, thank God, the royal occasion it was. But class rules in the oddest ways. Was there not something distinctly crazy about a country which abolished its middle classes' competitive-examination free-tuition schools and yet kept its upper classes' private educational sector? Because we are, in a signally depressing way, the creatures of class, the late Anthony Crosland wished to destroy the schools of the social group beneath him and promised to do so if it killed him, but did nothing to end the cash-and-class laager of Eton, Winchester, and all they inherit. That is the way with Britain. Partly because the monarchy screws up political judgment, the people at the top lose nothing very much under the most radical of under-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

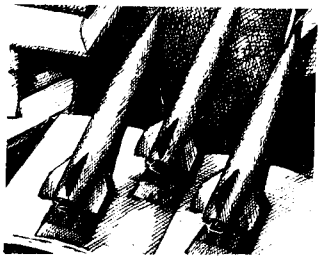
takings, while the people in the middle—and especially the lower middle—are clubbed on the head.

Somebody some day has to take a bulldozer to the whole edifice of privilege and caste by which future lives are largely determined. Royalty is simply a place to start—not by putting heads on polls, but assuredly by putting in tax-returns and paying them, by climbing out of the landau and the headlines, and by declining to be "*Sir*" to even the most courtly and ingratiating ex-editor. And Fleet Street? Well, it may find self-respect if it starts a long search. An under-reported monarchy would be the beginning of civilisation. As Chekhov put it, we must squeeze the serf out of our soul, drop by drop.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

The Terrorist Strategy



THE WAVE of terrorism which has broken over Europe for the past twenty years is international and State-sponsored. Above all, it has attacked the democracies. Admittedly, the groups involved in it began by acting independently of each other and for very diverse motives: in the early days, at least, they were not inspired or aided from outside. Today, however, they are coordinated. They help each other; they exchange personnel; they share training camps.

We know too, and we should have realised earlier, that they are backed by States which finance them, arm them, when necessary shelter them, give them forged documents, and direct their operations. Which States? Libya, Syria, Iran, Cuba, more recently Nicaragua, formerly Iraq (at present taken up with its war against Iran), North Korea, Bulgaria, and—more discreetly—Czechoslovakia. And of course the USSR, although adroit enough to avoid being openly compromised, is not exactly on bad terms with these terrorist countries—except Iran, which it treats with angelic patience.

To combat present-day terrorism, the first step is to identify it. What we face is a form of inter-State warfare, waged against ourselves. The Western democracies, its prime target, are described by its organisers, in their cosmopolitan jargon, as "the Imperialist Camp." The vast majority of the acts of violence committed world-wide in the last ten years, in fact, have been in Western Europe or in those countries of Latin America which are or which seek to become democratic. Even if the terrorist groups sprang up spontaneously, their present inspiration and objectives are not what they were at the start: they now belong to a movement. Outside it, they would no longer have the resources to carry on. Even when they retain some slight autonomy, this is little more than "independence in interdependence."

Present-day terrorism is very different from the resistance and guerrilla movements to which it is too often compared. "Resistance" fighters attack their real enemy—an army of Occupation, or the police of a dictatorial régime: they are the weak against the strong, the few against the many, the ill-equipped against the better-armed. With typical intellectual debility, current "revolutionary" theory coined the expression "Urban Guerilla" to describe assassination with no risk to the assassin, in free and unprotected countries where the victims are defenceless and innocent of any responsibility for the wrongs alleged by the criminals.

Such misuse of language insults the sharpshooters, guerrilleros, and resistance fighters of all epochs, including our own, who have died and are still dying in their fight for freedom against overwhelming military power or ruthless totalitarian police. What have they in common with the drugged or brainwashed killers sent by their dictator bosses into airports, shops, restaurants, stations, trains, schools, or places of worship in free countries? When did they ever massacre civilians with not the remotest geographical or political connection with the cause which the hit-men and their masters claim to defend? The terrorists' ostensible cause, if they have one, is hindered rather than helped by their crimes. One can only conclude that their real aim is not to solve the Palestinian or any other problem, but simply to sow chaos in the countries under attack.

THEIR METHOD, in fact, is a generalised hostage system, with the population of the democratic countries as the potential but permanent victim. We all know how such a system works, hijacking aircraft or liners, or seizing prisoners, then offering to release innocent people in exchange for assassins—or some other political concession. If the democracies accept the deal, they are seriously weakened; if they refuse, they condemn the hostages to death. Specific cases are familiar: but our present danger is more general. The whole population is under permanent threat from international terrorism, which can strike how, when, and where it likes.

Nor do the terrorists make a secret of the threat. Very often, they give advance warning of operations to avenge some alleged affront, such as not releasing one of their hit-men after an atrocity. So the inhabitants of Western Europe live from one attack to another, in the same basic situation as passengers in a hijacked aircraft, liable to be killed at any moment if the terrorists' demands are not met. As our blackmailers warn us, any one of us can be attacked at any time, anywhere in our own countries. As we all know, almost anybody can enter them, and find in any appropriate embassy the weapons he needs, previously imported in the "diplomatic" bag. This repeated abuse of diplomatic immunity ought, incidentally, to free us from any obligation to respect it when the assassins' accomplices and organisers violate it so outrageously.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For fifteen years, Western Governments have failed—or refused—to understand how novel this form of warfare is. Some have simply sought to appease the terrorists by offering them a refuge. Others have even excused terrorism, like the former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky or the Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi. Their "reasonableness" was rewarded by carnage in Vienna and Rome. Most Governments have pretended not to see the patron States behind the bombs and submachine-guns, for fear of having to stand up to them, and especially to the most powerful.

IT IS PARANOID to see some organising logic in the growth of international State terrorism? If it is, our Governments must be in tip-top mental health. Those with more suspicious minds may prefer to recall that already in the 1960s, and increasingly since then, Palestinians have been operating in Uruguay and France, Japanese in Israel and the Netherlands, and Germans in Sweden and Uganda. They may also remember that the officer controlling Carlos in Paris in 1975 was a Cuban "diplomat", and that one of those arrested for the Asala outrage in July 1983, which killed so many people at Orly airport, carried a Syrian passport. Members of the Basque *ETA* movement are helping the Sandinista régime in Nicaragua, while weapons supplied by Nicaragua were used by the Colombian terrorists who attacked the Palace of Justice in Bogotá in November 1985. Gaddafi had the nerve to boast, during an official visit to Spain, that he was supplying *ETA*. Here, incidentally, the anti-Zionist argument was beside the point, since Spain (until recently) never recognised Israel. Abou Nidal, finally, after working many years for Iraq, is at present in the service of Syria, while maintaining his headquarters in Libya.

Libya, after first claiming responsibility for the Vienna and Rome outrages, later denied any part in them. The Soviet Union, in its Red Army newspaper *Red Star* (4 January 1986), simultaneously accused the United States and Israel of preparing an attack on Tripoli. Syria took up the same tune. Can anyone seriously contend that there is no complicity, when the USSR has turned Libya into a colossal and ever-growing arsenal, including missiles? Not to mention 7-9,000 Soviet military advisers.

That is why Gaddafi feels strongly enough backed to threaten to "set ablaze all the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and even the whole world" if anyone attempts to stand in his way. The response? An outcry in Great Britain, begging Reagan and Peres "not to attack Gaddafi for fear of harming the peace process in the Middle East"—a process which, as everyone knows, the charming colonel has always so zealously backed that if he were to fall it would be fatal to world peace. . . . If Reagan suggests economic sanctions, Germany hastens to announce that she will not apply them; while Italy declares that, of course, she would apply them if they were an effective measure against terrorism, but since they are not. . . . So, if economic action and military force are both ruled out, all that remains is diplomatic pressure—which the democracies are more apt to suffer than to exert.

The battle against international State terrorism can only be waged by international cooperation, not merely in policing, but in politics. Simply to state this fact makes obvious how difficult it is. As soon as the democracies face a serious challenge, they react by stressing their disagreements or even paying off mutual scores. Only very seldom do they unite against the danger that threatens them all. The terrorist States are well aware of this, and they use it to double advantage, both harming the democracies and further dividing them.

Cooperation against terrorism, of course, must involve political cooperation and joint action—not just verbal unanimity in "gravely deploring", "forthrightly condemning", or similar impotent yelps. At the opposite extreme from mere resignation lie the dangers of military adventurism. And the middle course is that of active diplomacy. This would mean making starkly clear to the States concerned, and above all to the USSR, that we do not believe a word of their denials, and that we shall make none of the overtures they seek from us so long as they continue to assist terrorism.

Look at it from their point of view. So far, international State terrorism has dealt us terrible blows—human, moral and political. Terrorism has brought them enormous gains, such as the removal of the American and French peace-keeping forces from Lebanon with barely a shot being fired. And when at long last the West, or more precisely the United States alone (with the help of Britain only), struck back, Gaddafi wasn't toppled; but considerable divisions were stirred between Europe and America, and anti-American reactions proliferated in European public opinion. From the perspective of the terrorist countries, the American bombing of Libya just unveiled a little more about Western inconsistencies and lack of collective political will. Why, then, shouldn't they go on?

Presidential Preserves

THIS IS ONE of those rare works of "political science" which describe how a Government's day-to-day business is carried on. Who takes the decision? How? With what information? Samy Cohen brings French politics to life for us, and avoids both over-systematised generalisations and insignificant gossip.[1]

While his subject is huge, it is also clearly defined and easy to observe: French foreign policy since 1958. This, as everyone knows, is decided by the President in the Elysée Palace, although no such "Presidential Preserve" (*domaine réservé*) is recognised by the Constitution—a fact which Left-Right "*cohabitation*" and the debates surrounding it have begun to make clear. The President's foreign-policy role is something that has evolved out of practice: it derives from the

[1] *Le monarchie nucléaire, ou les coulisses de la politique étrangère sous la V^e République*. By SAMY COHEN. Hachette.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

previous régime, when the President's and the Parliament's electoral majority were of the same political colour. This gave the French President powers over foreign policy which were greater than those of any other democratic Head of State or Government. Only the French President is free from the need for any prior consultation (except with his faithful entourage) or any subsequent calling to account. He need not even explain himself.

This accounts for successive Presidents' tendency to rely more and more on their own intuition. François Mitterrand (in a radio broadcast on 9 December 1985) even declared that he could not confide in a Prime Minister of his own party, because such matters were almost "*incommunicable*." If foreign-policy-making really results from some sort of mystical vision, it's understandable that ordinary mortals are still perplexed by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's trip to Warsaw in 1980 or François Mitterrand's welcome to General Jaruzelski in Paris in 1985.

General de Gaulle was equally a law unto himself. He told just three of his Ministers—without asking their opinion—before taking the decision, momentous for the future of France and for East-West relations, to withdraw from NATO. Unlike the US President, who is constantly watched by Congress, the French Head of State refuses any real Parliamentary supervision. The Defence Agreement between France and Zaire, for example, signed on 22 May 1974, only came before the Assembly on 22 November 1978, four years after France's military intervention at Kolwezi. François Mitterrand saw no need to call an emergency session of Parliament before launching "Operation Manta" in Chad—although an emergency debate was held at once to authorise a Fifth Television Channel. "Operation Manta" was only thirteen days ahead when the Foreign Minister, Claude Cheysson, at last deigned to brief the Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee. Even new agreements lacking the urgency of a military decision, but requiring State finance, are not put before Parliament. This was the case with the gas contracts concluded with the USSR and Algeria (in January 1982) at a rate above that of the world market.

As well as using such cavalier tactics, the Elysée conducts parallel diplomacy, behind the back of the Foreign Minister, by means of very peculiar special envoys. This was a role entrusted to Michel Poniatowski, for example, in the days of Jean François-Poncet and Roland Dumas, before the latter replaced Claude Cheysson. The President's personal emissaries differ from, say, Dr Henry Kissinger, to whom Nixon entrusted secret missions unknown to the State Department, for Kissinger, at that time, held an official post in the White House, as National Security Adviser, whose duties everyone knew. No such post exists in the Elysée Palace; but it teems with advisers, many of them recruited among the President's personal friends—whereas Nixon had never met Kissinger when he asked him to head the National Security Council in 1968.

> "In 1981 [Samy Cohen writes] a former Dean of the Dentistry Faculty, Guy Penne, who is said to have persuaded François Mitterrand to have his teeth polished before the Presidential election campaign, became the President's 'man for Africa' ('Monsieur Afrique'), because Mitterrand trusted him. . . . Since 1982, Guy Penne has had as his deputy Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, whose chief claim to distinction is as the President's son."

All this considerably reduces the role of the Foreign Minister. Samy Cohen, with documents to prove his case, even refutes the legend that Michel Jobert had more scope for initiative at the Foreign Ministry than his predecessors and successors. In fact, it was President Georges Pompidou, despite his serious illness, who held the reins and gave Jobert precise, detailed, and imperative instructions.

EXPERTS, CAREER DIPLOMATS, or specialists and researchers in organised think-tanks, seem also to have little influence on the Head of State's decisions. It is surprising how trivial, in the end, is some of the Government's secret "intelligence"—so much so that Presidents sometimes fall into traps which would seem glaringly obvious to an average reader of the press.

For example, after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Leonid Brezhnev sent two messages to Giscard d'Estaing, one at the end of December 1979, the other in January 1980, claiming that the decision to invade had been taken against his own wishes by the "hard men" of the Politburo, Suslov and Gromyko. He was counting on the French President, he said, to support the Politburo "moderates" and himself in particular, by making some gesture in favour of maintaining *détente*. This was why Giscard went to Warsaw. Five minutes' talk with a good Sovietologist could have disabused him and prevented Giscard falling for this ancient Soviet fairy-tale of the Kremlin "hawks" terrorising the "doves", whom the West must help in order to safeguard peace. As long ago as 1944 Stalin had outwitted Roosevelt with the same ruse.

In 1983, again, it was surprising how long it took the silent Elysée to realise that Libyan troops were in Chad—a fact which anyone listening once a day to the radio had known for several weeks. As late as mid-August, Claude Cheysson was still claiming to have no proof that the conflict had thus been "internationalised." He was the only one left in the dark. One sometimes wonders whether Ministers might not profit from going out to the street-corner to buy a newspaper. Some

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Leading academics
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
Experienced honours graduates
TRANSLATORS
Qualified, most European languages
ARCHIVISTS
Editing and indexing by word processor

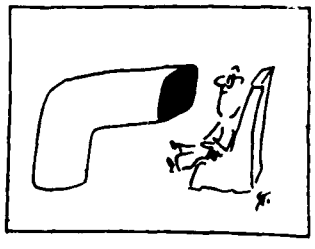
Research Assistance Routledge Associates
4 Lauriston Road, London SW19 4TQ
Phone 01-947 9375

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

politicians' ideas about international relations seem to be based on the previous decade's clichés or a vague memory of the books which came out when they still had time to read.

Foreign policy and defence policy always, of course, demand efficiency and speed. So there has to be a centre where decisions are made. But the French doctrine of the "Presidential Preserve" leads to the dogma of Presidential infallibility, with the country's foreign policy conceived and conducted by a single man, required neither to consult beforehand nor to report back. Are the advantages of rapidity and continuity so great as to offset the risk of disastrous decisions being taken in the solitary illusion of omniscience? Sometimes, perhaps: but not always. Presidential prerogative, *le primat élyséen,* by no means rules out either inconsistency or long periods of indecision when the time comes to act.

TV Agonies



WHAT CAN I SAY about our French television but that, caught as it has been for decades now between the powers of the State and the constraints of bureaucracy, it has suffered a severely retarded childhood. It has tended to please the politicians first; and then its own employees; and last of all the public.

The considerable financial resources of French television—more than 15 billion francs for the three networks in 1985—flow freely into equipment, overmanning, fringe benefits, waste, and political appointments, and too sparsely into the presentation of worthwhile images. Funds have regularly increased, but the creation of good and original work—in scenarios or current affairs—has constantly diminished. Hence the well-known bromide of repeats: old films, old plays. From the viewpoint of an audience which does after all pay money (and has to pay money) for simply switching on, the practice verges on fraud. But I suppose everybody knows that when the *escroquerie* comes from within a state organisation it stops being fraud and calls itself public service.

However, my sentiments would mean little without the support of reliable facts and figures, and that is the value of *En toute liberté*,[1] a new book by Jean-Marie Cavada which is sensible, concrete, and international in scope, indeed a striking combination of autobiography and argument. The author had a high-level career, which has taken him through all three French TV networks (and various radio stations as well), and he has assembled a host of facts: hard evidence.

To cite only one instance, it is often put about that the overall decline in the circulation of the national daily press in France has been caused by "the growth of the audio-visual media." Yet in 1963 France had a total of 3½ million TV sets, while Britain had almost four times that number (12½ million); and the British daily press, both tabloid and "quality", has more titles with an incomparably higher circulation than our own.

The same applies to advertising revenues, which the explosion of privately-owned TV stations was thought likely to harm, to the point of endangering the existence of many newspapers. Here again, the figures disprove the myth. In every country where television is free (or has been freed), experience shows that the increase in advertising revenue has benefited both the audio-visual media and the press *at the same time*. Cavada studies the phenomenon in the United States and among our own European neighbours, and particularly in Italy, since the decisive judgment of the high court, which gave free rein to private TV stations in 1976.

BUT WHY IS IT that France is emerging at last from its statist, bureaucratic, corporatist and, in any case, bankrupt system, only to sell the future commercial networks to foreign entrepreneurs—and to sell them, by an absurd paradox, on the initiative of the State itself? For while Berlusconi is already in position, others are on the ladder, or in the shadows, and sooner or later they will come out: our own Maxwells, Murdochs, and Ted Turners.

One thing is clear. The State must abandon, once and for all, its claim to predetermine creativity, information, and talent. French television has never lacked personalities (and mediocrities, of course), but that has been in spite of its unwieldy and paralysing structures, not because of them. In the audio-visual field as elsewhere, as Cavada rightly concludes, the State must stop playing the part of the *entrepreneur* and come back at long last to its proper role: it should "lay down the general rules of organisation", and "withdraw from everything else. . . ."

J.-F.R.

[1] *En toute liberté*. By JEAN-MARIE CAVADA. Grasset.

Change of Address: A Reminder

All departments of ENCOUNTER *have moved to*

44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (01-434-3063)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Decline of the Sage

From Jeffrey to Bellow—*By* NEIL BERRY

FRANCIS JEFFREY, who edited *The Edinburgh Review* from 1802 until 1829, and who set the pattern for the "higher journalism" of subsequent years, was a committed crusader. An Edinburgh barrister by profession, and a Whig in politics, Jeffrey was much influenced by the Enlightenment, dedicating himself—to use a phrase of which he and his colleagues were fond—to instructing the public mind. He has too often been remembered merely as Wordsworth's wrong-headed detractor; his true status was that of a Scottish *philosophe*—indeed, Carlyle was to describe him as a Scotch Voltaire. A polymath editor and reviewer, who eventually went into politics, Jeffrey was nothing if not high-minded, and his letters testify to his sense of the magisterial purpose of periodical writing, just as they exude confidence in the power of polemics:

> "You will never understand what gratification this new vocation can give you [enthused Jeffrey in a letter to a new recruit of 1814] till you set about correcting some prevailing error, or laying down some original principle of taste or reasoning. It is something to think that at least 50,000 people will read what you write in less than a month. We print now nearly 13,000 copies, and may reckon, I suppose modestly, on three or four readers of the popular articles per copy: no prose preachers, I believe, have so large an audience."

Jeffrey and his fellow *Edinburgh* reviewers—principally Henry Brougham and Sydney Smith—were indeed, as Jeffrey put it, "prose preachers", seeking to expose social abuses and to create a climate of opinion favourable to reform. And since the causes which *The Edinburgh Review* espoused—the abolition of the Slave Trade, Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform—were to triumph within their own lifetimes, the Reviewers were able to feel, looking back on their efforts, that they had not preached in vain. When Sydney Smith, a preacher from the pulpit as well as from *The Edinburgh Review*, published his collected writings in 1839, he proudly remarked that when *The Edinburgh Review* began publication, a thousand evils had been in existence which, thanks in no small part to the *Review*'s endeavours, had since been removed. And Jeffrey himself, as can be judged from the Preface to his *Contributions*—the four volumes of *Edinburgh* articles which he published in 1844—was in no doubt that his writings had assisted powerfully in the spreading of "just and enlightened opinions."

If such claims now sound immodest, it is perhaps because it has become difficult to share the Reviewers' fundamental assumptions. *The Edinburgh Review* embodied a faith, a faith which events seemed to justify: that the propagation of knowledge and argument was a sure antidote to ignorance, injustice and oppression. It rested, in short, on exactly the same postulate as Diderot's *Encyclopédie*; indeed, with proper qualifications, *The Edinburgh Review* may be regarded as a northern version of that great memorial to the Enlightenment. Both publications became compendia of rational opinions and information; both, though ultimately collaborative ventures, depended on the energy, dedication, and capacity for organisation of a single editor; both achieved immense, almost universal prestige. The simple fact is that there was an ever-swelling public appetite for knowledge and instruction, and didactic writers had no trouble in finding appreciative readers.

Although the *Edinburgh* reviewers wrote anonymously, employing the royal "we" and aspiring to sound like the very voice of reason, lack of by-lines did not prevent Jeffrey, Brougham and Smith—to say nothing of Macaulay, also an *Edinburgh* reviewer—from achieving celebrity. As Whig writers, they had their enemies, but they were also revered as teachers; and it was no accident that *The Edinburgh Review* played a part in the founding of London University. Later, the practice of anonymity would steadily dwindle in the face of mounting interest in names and personalities, and two of the prose preachers who succeeded the *Edinburgh* reviewers enjoyed fame on a lavish scale.

Carlyle, who made his début in *The Edinburgh Review* under Jeffrey's aegis, was almost as great an object of fascination as any television personality today. His house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, attracted pilgrims from both home and abroad. After his death, it was kept open as a shrine. Carlyle, it must be said, had not been averse to image-building: he spent so much time sitting for paintings that it is hardly frivolous to wonder when he found the time to write,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

let alone to write so voluminously. Through his many portraits, Carlyle projected himself as a sage-cum-prophet—bearded, grave, burdened by a sense of destiny. At the same time, he promulgated the notion that the man of letters belonged among the heroes of the modern world; and journals like *The Edinburgh Review* provided him, and heroes like him, with a pulpit from which to declaim, when they were not publishing books. Writing, moreover, before the advent of mass education, the social critic and moralist could feel confident that there were thousands of readers out there keen to receive the word and to improve themselves. If, in fact, Carlyle was more often than not on the verge of despair, it was not from the failure of his works to sell. There can have been few Victorian households without a copy of something or other by the Sage of Cheyne Row, few households which remained wholly immune to his opinions and fulminations and which knew nothing about his attitude to Chartism, to the "Nigger question", to the Corn Laws, or about his estimates of a whole series of (to Carlyle) exemplary historical figures. It is piquant to recall that Jeffrey, in spite of his high opinion of Carlyle's abilities, had deplored his idiosyncratic prose and, at last, had predicted that Carlyle would never do.

RUSKIN LIKEWISE comported himself as a sage. Carlyle, born in 1795, and twenty years his senior, provided something of a role-model for him; and the two men, united perhaps by their common Scottish background and by an inherited propensity to moralise, remained in regular correspondence. Eventually the filial piety which Ruskin felt towards the older man became overt as he began in his letters to address Carlyle as "Papa." Ruskin's works—great tomes which, like Carlyle's books, now have the aspect of archaeological remains—grew to be as much concerned with ethics and with spiritual salvation as with their ostensible subjects, art and architecture. As Timothy Hilton points out in his fine book, *John Ruskin: The Early Years*,[1] Ruskin was a connoisseur of other men's preaching, attending church as much, it appears, out of professional curiosity as anything else, and he became on his own account a secular preacher. In his heyday in the 1860s, Ruskin could fill a lecture hall anywhere in England. With *Unto this Last* (1860-62), his first avowed tract against the times, his moralising impulse burst into full flower, establishing him unequivocally as an implacable enemy of materialism and of the worship of Mammon. ("There is no wealth but life", as he famously declared.) Politicians and public figures, not to mention businessmen and the captains of industry, considered him a crank; and Thackeray, who, as editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* had agreed to publish his work, revoked his decision after the appearance of the first instalment. Plenty of others, however, were paying, and would go on paying, attention. It was Ruskin whom many early members of the Labour Party acknowledged as their mentor; perhaps, too, he

[1] *John Ruskin: The Early Years*. By TIMOTHY HILTON. Yale University Press, $19.95, £12.95.

Introduction to work study

Known throughout the world as the best available introduction to the subject, this new edition takes full account of recent advances in work study, especially with respect to working conditions, work measurement, predetermined time standards, standard data and modern developments in work organisation. "It is remarkably complete as well as being extremely well presented. With a wealth of illustration material rarely found in any text-book, it deals exaustively with its subject . . . I would take this to be the great classic text in work study." (*Industrial and Commercial Training*, Northampton)

ISBN 92-2-101939-X **£8.35**

Technological change: The tripartite response, 1982-85

This volume brings together in-depth studies on how employment might change in the future, on the major provisions of leading collective agreements, and on the active steps taken by both employers' and workers' organisations to offset the negative impact of technology on the labour force and to provide a safe work environment. National and international perspective is given to the key issues treated in each chapter, with reports on particular countries being followed by more general international reports.

ISBN 92-2-105162-5 **£10.00**

Structural adjustment in Japan, 1970-82

By R. P. Dore, with contributions by K. Taira

Employment, Adjustment and Industrialisation Study No. 1

Japan has a central position in the industrial adjustment process and most other industrialised countries would agree that it has been the cause to make adjustments at home. At the same time, Japan has undergone a major adjustment process itself. Recently it evoked protectionist reactions due to its low-cost labour-intensive exports. Today it is a major force in fast-growing high technology industries apart from aerospace. This study examines its ability to become an important producer and exporter in many of these new areas, done with a minimum of friction and unemployment.

ISBN 92-2-105268-0 **£10.00**

Trade, employment and industrialisation in Singapore

By L. Lim and P. Eng Fong

Employment, Adjustment and Industrialisation, Study No. 2

Singapore's successful economic industrial and export growth is attracting the attention of planners and policy-makers, entrepreneurs and trade unionists elsewhere. The pragmatic policies and much foreign investment have been crucial to development, together with interventionist policies which provide for basic needs and public services. In achieving this the government has limited the range of personal choices and influenced them by government incentives and rules.

ISBN 92-2-105231-1 **£8.35**

Further volumes on the Fed. Rep. of Germany, the Rep. of Korea, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States are under preparation.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Branch Office
96/98 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4LY
Tel: 01-828 6401

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can be numbered among the forefathers of the Welfare State, and as an influence on later moves to broaden educational provision—though, ironically, the Oxford working-men's college which bears his name was not a project which won his approval.

Neither Carlyle nor Ruskin, it is true, retained the exuberant faith in the efficacy of printed argument that Jeffrey was able to feel. Political Economy, the "dismal science" as Carlyle dubbed it, with its emphasis on machinery and accumulation, appeared impervious to their denunciations; for both of them, the campaign to alert their fellow-citizens to the perniciousness of modern idols and to jolt them into an awareness of higher things darkened into alienation—finally, in Ruskin's case, into psychosis and silence. In this respect, they had in this century something of a counterpart in D. H. Lawrence.

Lawrence, reared in a chapel-dominated, nonconformist environment, was a born proselytiser: but, though his anger about the world's delinquency came to be at least the equal of Carlyle's, Lawrence was far from subsiding into mute despair; rather—as many of his letters[2] and substantial parts of his novels all too monotonously show—he resorted increasingly to rant and imprecation. He could scarcely have been aware that the embryo of his immense posthumous cult—a cult which still compels scholars to scrutinise and annotate his smallest scribblings—was already fast germinating during his own lifetime. Malcolm Muggeridge has recalled, with characteristically ostentatious shame, how, on learning of Lawrence's death in 1930, he began to weep.

In other hands, however, the tradition of the sage, the tradition of instructing the public mind and of supplying moral uplift through journalism, essay-writing and polemics, survived buoyantly enough in the early decades of this century. Chesterton, for example—hugely popular as a journalist and pontificator, as well as huge in his own person—combined, often dazzlingly, didacticism and entertainment. To the end of his life he poured forth books and articles, and even published, in the 1920s, his own paper, *G. K.'s Weekly*, the very title of which is eloquent of the intimate terms on which he stood with his readers. Yet, though he died only 50 years ago, this superlatively versatile writer, with his sense of the power and glamour of the press, already seems a strangely remote, antediluvian figure. And so, equally, do his contemporaries Wells and Shaw, each of whom vied with him for the public ear, and each of whom was no less eager to secure converts.

More conspicuously humanist heirs of the Enlightenment than the Catholic and paradoxical Chesterton, Wells and Shaw could write with quasi-millennial optimism, unfazed by the ultimate disillusionment of some of their forerunners; unfazed, too, by the catastrophe of the First World War. Wells's mind, to be sure, was eventually to be driven, as he put it, to "the end of its tether" by the outbreak of the Second World War: his faith in *homo sapiens*, in mankind's essential rationality and educability, at last abruptly collapsed. The First World War, however, was barely over when he began publication—at first by instalments—of his audaciously polymath *Outline of History*, a work which bore witness to a *dix-huitième* confidence that the promulgation in compact form of enlightened information, of a "directive synthesis" of knowledge, could play a potent part in resolving global conflict and misunderstanding, and even lead, in due course, to the creation of—Wells's sustaining dream—a world state. And if the book did not succeed in its aims, it was not through public neglect: across several continents, and in several languages, it sold by the million. Its author, meanwhile, was befriended by press barons; Wells's status as a sage gave him access to the world of power politics; and, aspiring to change the world by personal intervention, he left his desk and went to see Lenin and, later, Stalin. Having, with no initial advantages, written himself into such prominence. Wells had good reason to suppose that the pen he wielded was a mighty instrument.

Wells's relationship with Shaw was a feline, tetchy one, as can be seen from a number of letters in the latest volume of Shaw's correspondence.[3] Wells complained that Shaw paid too little attention to fact, that he was a bit of a windbag, while Shaw mocked Wells for his pomposity. Yet both men, panoptic, rationalist progressives, convinced of the feasibility of Utopia as they were, can seem like essentially Enlightenment figures who strayed by accident into our specialist, defeatist century. And, whatever their differences, neither in his prime seems ever to have seriously doubted that writing can excite social change and, indeed, expedite the advent of a better, more just and orderly world.

No writing in English more zestfully epitomised the Enlightenment's faith in what can be achieved by the exercise of reason, exposition and exhortation than Shaw's *Prefaces*. These are writings instinct not just with a sense of the persuasiveness, but also of the sheer fun of argument. Both in person and on the page, Shaw was nothing if not theatrical, nothing if not a crowd-pleaser. In this respect he outdid even Chesterton, flamboyant though he could be; and the high comic spirits, brilliant lucidity and zeal for controversy exemplified by the *Prefaces*, and no less evident throughout Shaw's voluminous correspondence, recall nobody so much as Voltaire, the archetypal instance of the *philosophe* as showman. Shaw would surely have found no difficulty in making himself at home in the 18th century.

One of Bernard Shaw's casual achievements was to play a part in the founding of the *New Statesman*. The journal began publication in 1913, and both he and Wells were to become occasional contributors; they were also to cross swords in its pages. They had, too, an influence, albeit an imponderable one, on its ethos. Kingsley Martin, who edited the *New Statesman* from 1930 until 1960 (during which time for many liberal intellectuals the journal exercised semi-Biblical authority), declared in his autobiography that he had learned from them almost all he knew, and many other members of his generation would no doubt have echoed

[2] *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence. Vol. 3. 1916-21.* Edited by J. T. Boulton and A. Robertson. Cambridge University Press, £25.00.

[3] *Collected Letters 1911-1925.* By George Bernard Shaw. Edited by Dan H. Laurence. The Bodley Head, £25.00.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this sentiment. Kingsley Martin was, however, no less conscious of the precedent for his activities as an intellectual journalist set by the *philosophes* themselves. Possessed of a deep respect for Enlightenment thinking, he wrote a book on the subject; and in 1947 the cartoonist "Vicky" portrayed him as a *philosophe* in pantaloons, entitling the satire "*Le nouvel homme d'état.*" Moreover, he conducted the journal on the assumption—an assumption which would have been readily intelligible to Diderot or to Jeffrey—that by propagating knowledge, especially social-scientific knowledge, and by publishing rational arguments in favour of liberal initiatives, the just society might gradually, without violence and with general assent, be brought into existence.

KINGSLEY MARTIN was scarcely a sage on the scale of Shaw or Wells; nor was he above ideological corner-cutting, as may be judged from his fellow-travelling refusal to print Orwell's accounts of Stalinist duplicities during the Spanish Civil War. Yet Martin was no less fervent a preacher, writing his own column, "Critic", for 30 years and winning for the paper as high a readership as has ever been enjoyed by a publication of its kind. As his reign as the *New Statesman's* editor drew to a close, he had good grounds for congratulating himself on the fact that his major campaign—to dismantle the British Empire and to spread the spirit of socialism among Britain's former colonies—had borne fruit. Nevertheless, at the end of his life, he acknowledged that it was no longer easy to share the humanistic confidence which had animated the efforts of the *philosophes*. In an article about the *Encyclopédistes*, entitled "Manifesto of Rationalism", contributed to *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1969, Martin remarked that they had been engaged in the building of something resembling a new religion and that, accordingly, they wrote—like their later British counterparts, the *Edinburgh* reviewers, he might have added—with a tone of authority and assurance which beforehand only the pulpit had exercised. This quasi-religion, based as it was on a belief in the rationality and perfectibility of man, had, he suggested, lost its plausibility, all the more so since the threat of global nuclear destruction had begun to loom.

In his memoirs,[4] Martin reaffirmed his faith in the effectiveness of printed argument and discussion. Yet he had, in effect, conceded that he stood at the end of a tradition. The same might be said, *a fortiori*, of Leonard Woolf, one of his *New Statesman* colleagues, who in old age publicised his regrets about what he considered to be the futility of a life passed in politics and in political journalism. More histrionically, perhaps, Malcolm Muggeridge, another prolific contributor to the *New Statesman* during the Martin era, looks back on his career, much of it devoted to journalism and to secular advocacy before he turned to God, as a chronicle of wasted time. Certainly the testimonies of these New Statesmen possess none of the exultancy of those issued by the *Edinburgh* reviewers at the end of their careers.

[4] Kingsley Martin, *Editor: A Volume of Autobiography 1931-1945* (1968).

MUCH HAS CHANGED, of course, since the advent of television and the mass media. If the very activity of writing has lost its centrality, didactic, hortatory prose has fallen into almost complete desuetude. And while today there is not exactly a dearth of intellectuals and pundits, their public status is hardly equal to that of their counterparts even a generation ago. The world—and television does nothing to lessen the impression—seems ever more complex and intractable; judgment has reason to balk. Moreover, a widespread resistance to moralising has developed—even, if not especially, among the educated classes. It has become hard to believe that there was a time when "preaching" was not, for the most part, a derogatory word.

The reaction to Saul Bellow's latest novel *The Dean's December* (1982) was instructive in this respect. Conscious of living in a disintegrating civilisation, Bellow, in some ways an inheritor of the high seriousness of the Victorian sages, has recently taken to writing with barely disguised polemical urgency. Many reviewers, thinking that Bellow had delivered a crude jeremiad, almost winced at the gaucherie of the performance. On television, Bellow rounded on his critics, scorning them for their unthinking complacency. He also took the opportunity to reaffirm his book's message. Like his protagonist Dean Corde, Bellow "abyssified", proclaimed the lateness of the hour; though it may be doubted if, in spite of his television appearance, Bellow has secured as wide a hearing for his views as did, say, Carlyle a hundred years ago.

The posture of the moralist has sagged beneath the blows of satire and the thrusts of irony. It cannot be accidental that the term "judgmental", implying a negative judgment on the makers of judgments, has achieved such currency in recent years. More than ever, to hold forth is to risk provoking, by turns, embarrassment, boredom, ridicule. Jonathan Miller, who has been known to pontificate over the state of things, found himself the butt of a satirical feature in which he was guyed as Dr Jonathan, a speechifying bore attended by a drunken Boswellian toady. The joke appealed, no doubt, to a familiar anti-intellectualism; but it perhaps also exploited a relatively recent discomfort with the idea that any man could deserve reverence for his mental endowments and apophthegms. Admiration is now reserved strictly for the scoffers. The kind of discipleship and piety evoked by Carlyle has no place today. The last writer/moralist in that mould who commanded a substantial following, albeit chiefly an esoteric, intramural one, was F. R. Leavis. But already, just a few years after his death, the whole phenomenon of the Leavisite appears touchingly anachronistic.

The old notion of the essentially moral function of literature is, in any event, well on the way to seeming quaint; and even the assumption that literature, indeed writing of any kind, has a context, or a relationship to anything beyond itself, is under concerted attack. Fittingly, there is something ethereal about both the writings and person of Jacques Derrida, pre-eminent among the attackers in question. It comes as no surprise to learn that Derrida is interested in ghosts. Deconstruction, in whose development Derrida has played a central part, may have its intrinsic merits; yet, with its emphasis on the undecidability of texts and on the vanity

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of interpretation, it seems curiously apt for an age of defeatism and retreat, in which many people casually assume that they may soon be blown to atoms.

The moral *gravitas* of the Victorian sage has finally given way to, at best, the cult of *le plaisir du texte* and, at worst, to outright nihilism. Western literature, Deconstruction teaches, has been nothing but an accretion of codes, sign systems and rhetorics which it is the critic's late and solitary amusement to dismantle and expose to view. Preaching—which often used to depend on a text—was therefore just so much self-deception and imposture. A tradition is being stripped bare. The present moment may well be a good one for enquiry, for stock-taking and for reassessment, but otherwise it looks as though we must cultivate our gardens.

The Tragic Muse

Diaries of the Tolstoys—By RÜDIGER GÖRNER

A SUMMER EVENING in Yasnaya Polyana. The French windows of the music-room are wide open, and on the terrace, which overlooks the estate's orchards and meadows framed by innumerable birch trees, you can hear the chirping crickets. In the caressing warmth of the night Sofia Tolstaya, the Countess and mistress of the estate, tries to relax after having done her usual servant's work of endlessly copying out her husband's manuscripts, at the moment pages of his essay "On Life and Death"; as well as this task, she has taught her children and handled the affairs of Yasnaya Polyana where she has lived since her marriage in 1862.

Inside the house Seryozha, her eldest son, and her children's music teacher, Lyassota, begin to play Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata. Later that night Sofia writes in her diary about the performance: "What power! It expresses every conceivable human emotion."

The Kreutzer Sonata had also enraptured her husband, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, inspiring him to a rather insipid work of prose which was to undermine their marriage even further: *The Kreutzer Sonata*. "Insipid" only, of course, from Sofia Tolstaya's point of view; for Tolstoy's novella is a masterpiece of undoubted value. In Sofia's diaries,[1] Beethoven's sonata and her husband's short novel became fateful *leitmotifs*. In times of depression, frequent as they were, she would listen to the sonata; yet, at the same time, she was haunted by the embarrassment and distress which was caused by her husband's "prose version" of it.

Two of her confessions about *The Kreutzer Sonata* reveal more than any further comment could. On 12 February 1891:

> "I too know in my heart that this story is directed against me, and that it has done me a great wrong, humiliated me in the eyes of the world and destroyed the last vestiges of love between us."

And on 2 March 1891:

> "If only the people who read *The Kreutzer Sonata* so reverently had an inkling of the voluptuous life he leads, and realised it was only this that made him happy and good-natured, then they would cast this deity from the pedestal where they have placed him! Yet I love him when he is kind and normal and full of human weaknesses. One should not be an animal, but nor should one preach virtues one does not have."

Sofia detested all kinds of hypocrisy, such as her husband's praise of chastity. He himself for a long time knew no restraint whatsoever; no restraint and no respect, physically, emotionally or intellectually. He did not spare much mercy for Sofia when writing *The Kreutzer Sonata*; he did not consider her health when he despised her for not being able to breast-feed all of their thirteen children; nor did he respect very much her own interests and her mental and emotional escape into the realm of music. To make matters worse, Tolstoy took up all this from the husband's point of view and analysed it in his novella. Moreover, Tolstoy, referring to his main character, did not clearly condemn Pósdnishev's cruelty and eventual murder of his wife, because he blamed her indirectly for his behaviour.

But the centre of Pósdnishev's jealousy was his wife's affection for a weak but gentle violinist who played the Kreutzer Sonata with her. Playing a duo was in his eyes synonymous with love-making and thus with betraying him.

Despite the fact that Tolstoy was more than indiscreet in his novella about their private affairs, Sofia eventually came to terms with the situation and once again defended her husband's artistic case; a telling testimony for her human greatness. The scandalous little book was banned but, ironically, Sofia intervened on its and her husband's behalf, and even went to the Czar asking for permission to in-

[1] *The Diaries of Sofia Tolstoy*. Edited by O. A. GOLINENKO, S. A. ROZANOVA, B. M. SHUMOVA, I. A. POKROUSKAYA, and N. I. AZAROUA. Translated by CATHY PORTER. Random House, $35.00; Jonathan Cape, £30.00.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

corporate the novella into the edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works*. Sofia gives us an amusing account of this meeting. The crucial moment of the quite open talk came when the Czar asked her:

> "'Surely, though, you would not give a book like that to your children to read?'
>
> I said: 'This story has unfortunately taken a rather extreme form, but the fundamental idea is that the ideal is always unattainable. If the ideal is total chastity, then people can be pure only in marriage.'"

Sofia convinced the Czar, and the ban was lifted—but not the sorrowful spell of the novella. It remained a burden, among others, upon their marriage.

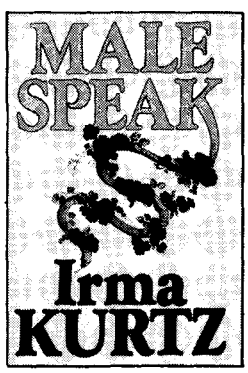
In *The Kreutzer Sonata* Tolstoy not only transposed his marital problems to literary realism; he also anticipated Sofia's further withdrawal from him in favour of a deeper involvement with the world of music. When he realised how intense his wife's friendship with the composer Sergei Taneev had become, years after the completion of his novella, his state of mind resembled that of the fictional Pósdnishev: "A period of love—a period of bitterness—a spirited period of love—a long period of bitterness—a weaker manifestation of love—a brief period of bitterness" and of jealousy, the stimulating poison of love and hate.

READING SOFIA'S DIARY, which she often called her best friend, one gets the impression that her marriage was nothing but an institution of passionate antagonism, an unchanging scene of frenzy and devotion. Where did all this tension originate? Sofia is explicit about it on the first page: "I always dreamt of the man I would love as a completely whole, new, pure person." But when Tolstoy gave his diaries to his young wife she discovered how little he had been pure in the past. We learn how painful it was, even decades after their wedding-day, to copy out his diaries and to write a kind of biography of her husband. Tolstoy, too, felt increasingly ambiguous about his past, to the point of not talking about it any more. On 17 December 1890, Sofia writes:

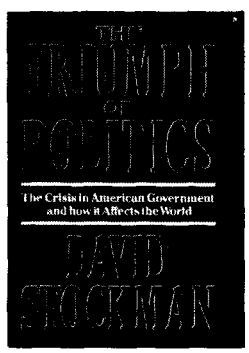
> "Lyovochka is beginning to worry about me copying out his diary. He would like to destroy his old diaries, as he wants to appear before his children and the public as a patriarchal figure. Still the same old vanity!"

Sofia, often unconsciously, gives in her diaries a most interesting account of the psychology of a man who became obsessed by the idea of purity, who was jealous of those endowed with such innocence—and foremost his own wife. She possessed the purity which he longed for.

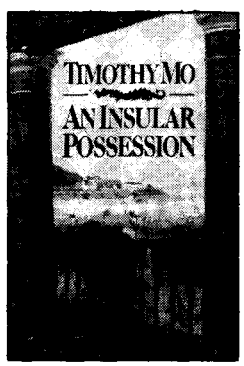
One tends to think of Tolstoy as a writer with huge epic breadth; but all his works, including *War and Peace*, consist of episodes, even miniatures which can exist in their own right. How could it be otherwise with an artist who loved and knew how to interpret "impressionistic" music such as Chopin's Nocturnes and Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words"? One of these remarkable miniatures was written in the form of a letter to Tanya, his wife's younger sister, six



Jonathan Cape
£9.95



The Bodley Head
£12.95



Chatto & Windus
£9.95

Virago Press
£3.50

Some important books published in May

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

months after his marriage to Sofia. In this short story, "The Porcelain Doll", Tolstoy refers to his wife in just that phrase: "I touched her arm—she was smooth, pleasant to feel, and cold porcelain." The reference occurs twice, making it obvious that Tolstoy interprets Sofia's purity as both admirable ("smooth", "pleasant") and frightening ("cold"). A rather odd fantasy, one might think, but very much in line with Tolstoy's way of thinking then and later, for he observes (in the story) that in his hand (and power!) she "suddenly seemed to shrink, and became quite small, smaller than the palm of my hand, although she still looked just the same." Under his domineering influence, however, Sofia was not altogether crushed and diminished. On the contrary: her diaries are a diagram of her strength.

She remained Tolstoy's irreplaceable muse and nurse until his late days when he finally decided to leave her:

27 October 1910

> "Lev Nik. has left! My God! He left a letter telling me not to look for him as he had gone for good, to live out his old age in peace. The moment I read those words I rushed outside in a frenzy of despair and jumped into the middle pond, where I swallowed a lot of water; Sasha and Bulgakov dragged me out with the help of Vanya Shuraev. Utter despair. Why did they save me?"

When Tolstoy died, in the self-chosen loneliness of the station master's house in Astapovo, a marriage came to an end which had been founded on two fateful complexes: Tolstoy's complex of purity and Sofia's complex of inadequacy. She tried to compensate for it with almost superhuman love and care for Tolstoy, while he played on her weakness and cultivated his own as a major inspiration for his writing.

Sofia often complained that although her husband was so wise, so capable of feeling with his fictitious characters and analysing their problems, he was unable to apply his wisdom to his own domestic affairs. Perhaps there is one exception: when Tolstoy wrote one of his most illuminating essay-letters about marriage to his second son Ilya Lvovich (October 1887), he took his wisdom from his own experiences:

> "This is what I think: to marry in order to enjoy oneself more will never work. To put marriage—union with the person you love—as your main aim, replacing everything else, is a big mistake. And it is obvious if you think about it. The aim is marriage. Well, you get married, and then what? If you have no other aim in life before marriage, then later on it will be terribly difficult, almost impossible for the two of you, to find one. It's almost certain that if you have no common aim before marriage, nothing will bring you together afterwards, and you will always be falling out. Marriage only brings happiness when there is a single aim—people meet on the road and say, 'Let's walk together'; 'Yes, let's'; and offer one another their hands—and not when people are attracted to one another and then both turn off the road in different directions."

Maybe Sofia would have expected such words from him in time; yet she often criticised him in her diaries for being too much of a moralist, castigating his family with sombre didacticism and hiding behind his "message" as a writer. Certainly, in his marriage Tolstoy had an aim which he pursued with single-minded dedication: his work. He had expected that Sofia would automatically share this aim at the expense of her own ambitions.

In so many of his writings Tolstoy dealt with the question "What is a fulfilling aim or purpose in life?" But he avoided answering whether such an aim could be a synthesis of the disparate interests of two people who decided to "walk together."

Can such an aim be a mutual agreement between partners? Is it a stepping-stone for a true partnership—or a sacrificial altar on which, in case of doubt, that very partnership might be sacrificed? In the second half of their marriage, Sofia was obviously convinced that her husband believed the latter. Recurring mutual estrangement was the natural consequence.

Even after Tolstoy's death, Sofia did not merely indulge in recollections glorifying the past: she concentrated again on painful work. She supervised the new edition of her husband's works, reading proofs all the time, going through his correspondence and preparing it for publication, and writing her own autobiography.

YASNAYA POLYANA in autumn 1917. The smell of bonfires and baked potatoes. "I picked a bunch of flowers and tidied the grave, then wandered alone around the garden, recalling my youth. . . . Time flies, war continues, famine looms ever closer."

No music, no social events. The aged Countess Sofia Tolstaya finds herself in the middle of political turmoil, and uncertain about what is going to happen to her home, whether it will be confiscated by revolutionary troops or not. Now Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata can no longer be heard from the music room, nor does she pick up her husband's novella any more. Instead, the rest of the family reads V. A. Posse's *A History of Communist Ideas*, and Sofia notes: "Most interesting!"

Nobody was to touch her property. The Bolsheviks knew how much they were indebted to Tolstoy's ideas. Quite appropriately, Sofia read in these days another piece, Tolstoy's pamphlet *To Political Activists*—which did not suggest, however, replacing an autocratic system by a new dictatorship. Tolstoy's concept of freedom for the proletariat was based on the self-determination of human individuals and education. Did he ever grant such self-determination to his wife?

Cathy Porter, who has produced a splendid translation of Sofia's diaries, describes them in her introduction as "a terrible reminder of the price of genius and the sacrifices made in its name." A married artist of outstanding quality leads a bigamous existence. He is married to his wife and to his work. Another writer who thought deeply on the subject—Rainer Maria Rilke, who greatly admired Tolstoy—finally denied that creativity and domesticity were compatible except in a marriage "in which each appoints the other guardian of his solitude", for "*togetherness* between two people is an impossibility."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Real emancipation, Rilke concluded, is the mutual recognition of each other's work, which has to become the centre of life. The drama of Tolstoy's marriage can now be seen in a different light. It was the union of two fully active volcanoes, separated yet connected by mysterious underground conduits. Sofia's diaries ask what the responsibility of a genius is. Her answer seems evident. His main responsibility is his work; but, if he chooses to marry, his marriage has to be part of it—without turning his partner into one of the characters in his books.

HISTORY AGAIN PROVES to be a major source of justice—confirming Sofia's point. The recent edition of Tolstoy's *Diaries*[2] provides a carefully selected series of counterfoils to Sofia's entries. Tolstoy's way of reflecting was strikingly different. He tended to condense his experiences and draw consequences only in the form of general "rules" and aphorisms; this feature of his diary is prevalent even at the times of his highest creativity.

It seems, however, that Tolstoy somehow programmed his decline as an artist in order to become (or, rather, to appear) a high priest of morality. He frequently devalued his artistic work, but indulged in self-praise whenever he managed to enrich his concept of morality with insights into man's sinful existence. One of these, which became the most important motif of his diary, was the incompatibility of passion and chastity:

24 June 1890, Yasnaya Polyana

"I must write a novel about a love that is chaste and affectionate . . . the sort of love in which there can be no transition to sensuality, which is the best defence against sensuality."

In 1852, at the age of twenty-three, the young Lev Nikolaevich had already noted:

"Sensuality has a completely antithetical basis: the more you refrain, the stronger the desire."

Tolstoy was tormented by this antithesis throughout his life. The more "rules" he set up for himself ("Rules for Developing the Physical Will", "Rules for Developing the Emotional Will", etc.), the less he came to terms with his own nature:

19 June 1850

"I can't overcome my sensuality, the more so since this passion has now become a habit with me."

By that time, Tolstoy was convinced that true art could be created only in a state of total innocence; it was decades before he went so far as to reject classical music in favour of folk music because classical music seemed to him a product of sensual sin—just right for decadent minds. Surely this

[2] *Tolstoy's Diaries*. Vols. I and II. Edited and translated by R. F. CHRISTIAN. Athlone Press, £45.00.

Pickwick Books Limited

A NEW PUBLISHING HOUSE OPENS AND REVIVES A CLASSIC OF LIBERAL ANTI-MARXIST LITERATURE

THE RED PRUSSIAN

The Life and Legend of Karl Marx

by

LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD

With a new introduction by Prof. Antony Flew

Recommended Price £16.

£14 post inclusive to readers of ENCOUNTER who purchase from

THE ALTERNATIVE BOOKSHOP

3 Langley Court, Covent Garden London WC2E 9JY

Telephone: 01-240 1804

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rejection was part of his jealousy (the "shameful thing", as he called it) and fury at Sofia's all-too-friendly words and looks for the "decadent" composer Taneev.

It is not that Tolstoy was unaware of Sofia's physical fragility or oblivious to her emotional turmoil, but he did not enquire about his own responsibility in this context. Instead, he philosophised almost cynically about equality of the sexes:

24 March 1863

"She is so impossibly pure and good and chaste for me."

15 February 1895

"She was decidedly close to madness and to suicide. . . . She was suffering terribly. It was the devil of jealousy, insane, groundless jealousy. I had only to love her again for me to understand her motives, and having understood her motives, it wasn't a question of forgiving her, but there being nothing to forgive."

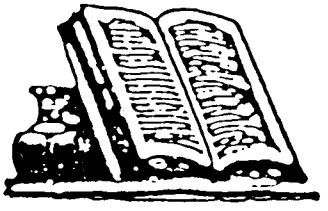
5 August 1895

"But is a woman always inferior to a man? Not at all; as long as they are both virgins they are equal."

The diaries of the two Tolstoys are attempts at self-defence; yet in Lev Nikolaevich's case he could add to Zola's great cry: "*J'accuse; et même la défense sera mon écho.*"

"Knowing" the Mystery

Against Reductionism—By MEG HARRIS WILLIAMS



LITERATURE AND other art forms are among the main means by which adults can get assistance in continuing their emotional education. The problem of whether these forms are used to confront experiences, or to avoid them, lies at the heart of the relation between art and the art-appreciator. I want to describe three distinct mental orientations toward aesthetic experience, which govern the way we make contact with works of art and consequently determine or limit what art can do for us.

The first of these is Linguistic Behaviourism, in which the basic assumptions of some cultural ethos are rigidified into propaganda, resulting in impoverishment of imagination. At the moment, in literary criticism, this is exemplified by Structuralism and Deconstruction.

The phantasy behind Structuralism caricatures itself: once upon a time (it goes) there was an Author-God who was hiding away meaning in the form of a "secret" inside his art-work, which was a kind of fortress protected by a scholarly organisation of old-style academic guardians. "Once the Author is removed", said Roland Barthes in *Image-Music-Text* (1977), "the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile." Literature is "no longer protected" (*Inaugural Lecture*, 1977).

Structuralism deposes this supposed Author-God and establishes a ruling oligarchy of literary critics, who explain the "sign-system" governing cultural "codes" within which literature must now be interpreted. It is presented as an heroic enterprise restoring the status of "underprivileged" relationships in literature, and, in the manner of all pseudo-sciences, offers *explanations* rather than descriptions of phenomena. The codes, which of course merely express the mentality of their users, are treated as irrefutable facts of nature, through which the critic can uncover the "real" messages embodied in the writer's unconscious assumptions, language, culture, and society. To support this, authoritarian and mechanistic views of the psychoanalytic process, such as the Lacanian, are employed: working under the aegis of a Big Daddy cultural god who lays down "the Word as the Law" (Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, 1977).

Pioneering linguistics has often observed that the surface grammar of a culture is secondary and sometimes even antagonistic to the *expressive* power of language, derived from its "deep grammar", where meaning is generated, as opposed to instructions or information merely being transmitted. This distinction between symbol-formation and sign-convention is dismissed by Structuralism, which, in its "revolutionary" way, sets the clock back by making its object (as Tzvetan Todorov wrote) "the literary discourse rather than works of literature, literature that is virtual rather than real" ("Structural Analysis of Narrative", *Novel*, No. III, 1969).

With the "return to close reading" of Deconstruction, the "intractable forces" which enslave the critic take on a sophistical slipperiness. As Jonathan Culler (*On Deconstruction*, 1983) puts it:

> "The demonstration that critics attempting to stand above or outside a literary domain in order to master it are caught up in the play of forces of the object they seek to describe—its tropological and transferential ruses—does not imply that deconstructive readings can escape these intractable forces."

The mastery of the critic now consists not in his stable scientific viewpoint (as in original Structuralism), but in his acceptance of the "intractable forces" of the sign-system which masters him and consequently gives him that "paradoxical" self-mastery. Constantly aware that someone else may be coming along to deconstruct him, he pre-empts

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this manoeuvre by deconstructing himself—"sawing off the branch on which one is sitting" is a description which Culler accepts.

Inevitably in this process, the hapless critic becomes what Barthes calls a "plaything" in "the war of fictions (jargons)", "the dummy in the bridge game" (*The Pleasure of the Text*, 1976). His identity is swept aside by the critical hierarchy who have given him his pack of cards, text and buzz words. He proceeds in the hope that so long as he keeps talking and presses the buzz words frequently enough, he will be carried along by the stream of slogans which (in Derrida's pun on "*différence*") "differ and defer" all around him. If he does not lay down the slogan the slogan may be laid on him, by the punitive gods of propaganda. Hence the frantic sense of panic to remain at the forefront of fashion, by means of the prefix "post" if nothing else (poststructuralist, postdeconstructionist, postmodernist). And though the buzz words of five years ago were "signifier", "signified" and "demystification", it is not impossible that those of five years hence may be "mystery" and "unknowing" (George Steiner, "A New Meaning of Meaning", *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 November 1985). But the mentality of the word-buzzer, the linguistic behaviourist, remains the same.

An example of the blindfolding quality of propaganda may be seen in a passage of "close" literary analysis in Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981). To illustrate the thesis that all structure is imposed by ways of reading or cultural codes external to the text, Culler gives the "ungrammaticality" of "My love is a red, red rose" (*sic*): "readers suspend the reference to actual roses but do so in favour of a reference to the woman's precious and fragile beauty." He concludes that "The interpretation of 'my love is a red, red rose' is based on the recognition of a code."

The question is, why is the line misquoted (twice)? The poem is not difficult in a lexical or syntactical sense. "My love is like a red, red rose" is the first line of one of the simplest and most famous lyrics in the English language. It is difficult in an *emotional* sense: a reader who is already committed to the code (whether personal or cultural) in which flowers, women, beauty and weakness are all tied up together, will be unable to see that the line expresses strength and quality of passion, not preciousness or fragility. He will be unconsciously forced to observe, not the actual words of the poem, but some substitution which fits his reductive framework. He "covers" the text with a code of his own ("covering" being one of Barthes' words for a critical metalanguage). Misquotation is an odd basis from which to discuss "ungrammaticality", but the rhythm alteration caused by the misquotation helps to disguise the way the word "dread" is hidden in "red, red"—the terror which is integral to passionate experience, and part of what the woman symbolises in this poem. This deconstruction of "My love is like a red, red rose" illustrates clearly how propulsion by propaganda, and scrabbling for little bits of evidence to support an ideology, not only leads to poor scholarship, but also prevents literature from being used for learning from experience.

The nearest the behaviourist critic comes to an insight is in his sad and deep-rooted self-contempt. His double message is: "You're a helpless robot only you don't know it: I'm a robot and I do know it."

In *The Genesis of Secrecy* (1975), Frank Kermode lamented the impotence of academic criticism's "hermetic tricks" in the face of the enigmatic text's "mystery or secrecy": "our sole hope and pleasure is in the perception of a momentary radiance, before the door of disappointment is firmly shut on us." His lament was that no key was available which would open all the doors at once—the ultimate interpretation. But he did not expose the impoverished viewpoint which, like Casaubon in *Middlemarch* with his "key to all mythologies", regards literature as a sort of fortified institution guarding a "secrecy" in the first place; nor did he distinguish between mystery and secrecy, but regarded them as synonymous. Yet it is the mentality of the secret-seeker which invites Linguistic Behaviourism, taking advantage of a void in academia's self-knowledge.

This intrusive voyeurism is continuously analysed and exorcised by creative writers. Shakespeare dramatised it through Polonius, who sets off to "find/ Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed/ Within the centre", and Hamlet condemns the hermetic procedures of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who try to "pluck out the heart of my mystery." Milton imaged it in the little devils who "Rifled the bowels of their mother earth/ For treasures better hid." As a mode of denying mental pain and avoiding real experience, it is an eternal aspect of the human condition.

Dear Shadows
PORTRAITS FROM MEMORY
JOHN WAIN

At 60 — over 30 years since *Hurry On Down* — John Wain looks back evocatively and with affection at those who have strongly influenced him — as diverse as Nevill Coghill, Marshall McLuhan, Richard Burton, a theatrical landlady and a black jazz trumpeter in Paris.
'I do not know the man, but his book makes me wish I did.' Frederic Raphael, *The Sunday Times* £10.95

THE LETTERS OF · JOHN CALMANN
1951·1980

At the time of his murder in 1980, John Calmann was an outstanding artbook publisher. He was one of the most quick-witted and stimulating of his generation — 'voluble, eloquent and epigrammatic in conversation'. His breadth of outlook and highly questioning mind shine through in these remarkable letters. Illustrated £13.50

JOHN MURRAY

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The reductions of behaviourism appeal to the provocativeness of the aged hippy in the cultural world. But a far more seductive and widely accepted species of reductionism is represented by the mentality of soft-centred humanism. "Softhumanism", as it could be called, is characterised by its air of benevolent maturity, its good intentions towards art, and its radiant complacency. It bewails the delinquency and intolerance of Structuralism, and functions instead under the aegis of a comforting Big Mummy goddess of culture. The underlying phantasy of softhumanism is that cultural experience is equivalent to playing with a soft toy. This must be carefully but indulgently monitored according to the British regulations for toy safety, in a confined play-space purpose-built for the "imagination." The life of phantasy is "only natural", and when a suitably watchful, really "adult" eye is kept upon it, there is nothing to be afraid of, because nothing can happen.

IN A RECENT REVIEW of a book by Charles Rycroft, Rosemary Dinnage said that artists had been "scared away" in the past by psychoanalysis's attitude to the imagination. Freud was "dark and pessimistic" about phantasy-life, but now, "As Rycroft says, Winnicott's enlargement of psychoanalytic theory to allow a real place for imagination and culture is the most important step in this field for thirty years" ("Out of the in-fighting", *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 September 1985).

Certainly, the Winnicottian theory of the "potential" or "transitional" space in cultural relationships is one of the most influential and exemplary amongst psychoanalytically-oriented softhumanists. In essence, this "intermediate area of experience . . . which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.)" is a halfway house between infantile "fantasy" and adult "shared reality" (being the sum of other people's phantasies) which is too harsh to be fully accepted (D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 1971). This quantitative compromise between two poles of delusion is taken to be an ideal model for creative experience. Relationships with art are seen as a type of necessary indulgence, an extended sucking of the blanket or the teddy bear, which has to be allotted appropriate time and space—not too little and not too much. They provide "relief" from "the strain of relating inner and outer reality", for mental health depends on "loyalty to a delimited area of society, perhaps the local bowls club."

The blanket, the bowls club, the safari park—these are the implicit theatres for imaginative activity offerd by softhumanist imagery, in lieu of passionate involvement. The "intermediate area" would appear to be something no liberal, hard-working, theatre-going, child-raising intellectual could possibly object to: how grateful we should be for this vision of imminent "relief", of "retreat for relaxation", which we can attain by playing with our mental teddy bears, using our imagination just like the artists do! Strange that somewhere at the back of one's mind is an odd sense of dissonance with the image which actual artists and poets seem to have of their imaginative activity. Instead of Winnicott's "neutral zone" where one can be safely "lost in play", Milton has some peculiar idea of a "void and formless Infinite", a "flight/Through utter and through middle darkness borne", and a place where "celestial Light" "plants eyes" and irradiates "the mind through all her powers."

If only Milton had *known* that the imagination is a place for retreat and relaxation, he need not have been so worried about Satan or those other internal gods of hate who tore the poet Orpheus to pieces. Yet the "enlarged" vision of softhumanism assumes that artists are "scared" (rather than just bored and despairing) of having their work "explained away." So committed is it to ensuring that imagination stays in its place, as a decorative relic of something we need no longer be ashamed and afraid of, that the possibility of internal disturbance and passionate response remains safely outside its sphere of conception.

Few are the works of literature which have escaped interpretative reduction to a "play between" such familiar alternatives as imagination and reality; nature and culture; perversion and normality; infantile wishes and adult rationality. The essence of the softhumanist mentality is to take a pair of long-established but unsatisfactory conceptual poles and to reduce the work of art to an interplay or compromise *between* them. An inevitable offshoot from this is the phantasy that the reader or viewer "completes" the artist's work, which has been left in a sort of unbalanced limbo, not so much from incapacity as from a touching recognition that he needs a really cultivated recipient, in order to "feel real" (Winnicott) himself.

Unconscious denigration of the artist's passionate and revolutionary symbolic creations has liberated many connoisseurs from the frustrations of uncreativity. Peter Fuller, for example, in *Art and Psychoanalysis* (1980)—backing his argument with Ernst Gombrich, Winnicott, and Marion Milner's *On Being Unable to Paint*—associates the inability to draw with a heightened cultural sensibility which has difficulty conforming with old-fashioned standards of object representation, owing to a new recognition of "a critical phase in the infant-mother relationship" in our times.

Gombrich himself, in *Meditations on a Hobby-Horse* (1963), describes the "wobbly glass" technique of perception, by means of which the "cultural institution" can enable "mature art" to grow. It is the "institution" of art connoisseurs who prescribe what is and is not an "aesthetic attitude": "We find repellent what offers too obvious, too childish, gratification. It invites regression and we do not feel secure enough to yield." When the artist paints a picture which is too "soft" or "perfect" (by which Gombrich seems to mean "pornographic"), the critic can correct it by literally putting a piece of wobbly glass in front of it, so converting it into mature "crunchy" art: "We have to become a little more active in reconstituting the image, and we are less disgusted." This is how the connoisseur "shares in the artist's secret"; while the self-critical artist, with a mature sense of the consumer's demands, knows to "apply the wobbly glass" himself.

ONE SEARCHES IN VAIN for a real alternative to these endless shifting manoeuvres of relativism and compromise, based on their model of infantile pre-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genital (oral and anal) gratification. Softhumanism is characterised by prefixes such as "un-", "de-", "re-", indicating a thorough backwards and forwards mastication, until the wobbly glass reflects satisfactorily and the work of art is tailored to fit cultured consumption. In the words of Anton Ehrenzweig: "The ego rhythm of differentiation and de-differentiation constantly swings . . . between the inside and outside worlds" (*The Hidden Order of Art*, 1967). The artist is seen as veering between psychotic fragmentation and a mature realisation of his anal preoccupations.

This balancing process is known in softhumanist jargon as "playfulness": a term structurally equivalent, for this mentality, to "demystification" in Structuralism. The ultimate standard is "maturity", which is synonymous with "acceptability." But the point and function of art is to be *incompletely* mature, so that there is still room for the audience to be playful. Thus according to Meredith Anne Skura (*The Literary Use of the Psycho-analytic Process*, 1981), our duty "as professional readers", is to set up "a body of alternative meanings . . . out of which we carve our final, acceptable meanings"—namely, those which correspond to "the light of sophisticated, adult ways of thinking." For, as Peter Fuller points out, "non-theological explanations are now possible" for irritating notions such as "transcendence", "mysticism", etc., so that at last we can "understand the aesthetic in a materialist fashion."

Shelley said that poets are "the unacknowledged legislators of the world"; but mature readers understand that he simply didn't know how to locate his cultural experience. Instead, the salvation of civilisation has arrived in the person of the soft-centred psychoanalyst or critic, who knows the "real place for imagination and culture" (Rosemary Dinnage), and can show the artist the way to the local bowls club. In this way, art can be explained and experience be avoided. Our well-balanced professional interpreters can use the wobbly glass of interpretation to excavate the "acceptable" meanings from art's primitive material. That is: they know, and can tell us, just how much and how long and where we may suck our "transitional" blankets, without ourselves becoming unacceptable.

THE QUESTION ARISES, *is* there any alternative to reductionism in its various forms? In academic criticism, the distinction is rarely made between ideas and ideologies. It is usually assumed that interpretation, or the imposition of an ideology of some sort, is inevitable and the only way to *write about* a work. Declarations of engagement in non-interpretative, non-evaluative forms of criticism are regarded with condescension, as evidence of the inability to recognise one's own pet ideology. This is so even though there is a general agreement that one's felt awareness or emotional experience of literature is in some way a *different thing* from a formulated interpretation, however comprehensive or up-to-date this may be.

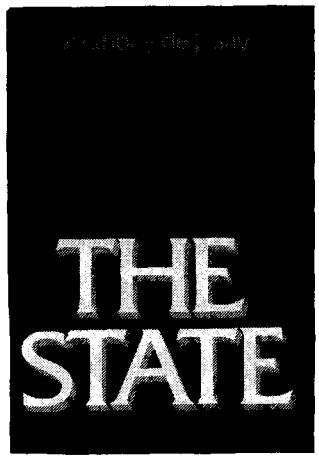
Alignment with the "mystery" of art is distinct both from verbal excavation of the "secrecy" and from benevolent compromise. The cognitive implications of an authentic relationship with art are antithetical to those of linguistic behaviourism and of idealised passionlessness, for both critic and reader. "One day men will learn to think of sanity as an aesthetic achievement", prophesied Adrian Stokes hopefully in 1964. By "sanity" I take him to mean "health" in the sense of the mind's capacity for development, the ability to digest food for the soul and hence for thought-processes to operate. In this context, the idea of "the aesthetic" refers to the area of creative, passionate relationships, whether within the fine arts or psychoanalysis, intimate personal relations or whatever. Aesthetic experience—the ability to enter into passionate response in some field of communication in life—and the capacity for mental development belong to the same realm of mental life.

In literary criticism, as in related activities, the mentality of symbolic congruence, or alignment with mystery, is more difficult than any form of hermeneutics both intellectually and emotionally, though in a sense based on art's openness. Its underlying metaphor, by contrast with the automatism of behaviourism and the spineless shifting of softhumanism, is the generation of *new realms* of meaning, through a pattern of dynamic tensions. In Coleridge's words, it "dissolves in order to recreate." The new space which is envisaged is not the compromising "potential space" of softhumanism, but Keats's "vale of soul-making." The rhythm of its creation is not an alternating but a progressive one of development and reformation, as in Byron's "feeling of a former world and a future."

This is an area of mental life which, though essentially and

'Blends individualistic political theory in the Lockean tradition with historical reflection in the spirit of Tocqueville . . . vigour and verve . . . wit and erudition.' *Times Literary Supplement*

'Strikingly original . . . I am struck by its sheer intellectual pleasurableness . . . Jasay offers the most compelling account of what is wrong and dangerous about the state.' Alan Ryan



300 pages, hardback **£19.50** (0 631 14015 5)
paperback **£8.50** (0 631 15048 X)

Basil Blackwell

108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF
Suite 1503, 432 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

universally part of the human condition, is modelled most clearly by the artist. As Susanne Langer pointed out (in *Feeling and Form*, 1953), the artist's central characteristic is the "intuitive recognition of forms symbolic of feeling, and his tendency to project emotive knowledge into such objective forms." She adds: "The great cognitive value of symbols is that they may present ideas transcending the interpretant's past experience." Through the artist's capacity to enter a symbolic relationship with his subject, a container for meaning is evolved which transcends any preconceptions. And the point about symbolic relationships is that they are themselves generative, not static. They present, as Langer puts it, the "life" of ideas, the "matrix of mentality", a dynamic psychic network through which the responsible reader or viewer may also transcend his previous knowledge. Artistic form, potentially at least, generates artistic reception, from the context of passionate response.

THE USUAL ACADEMIC CONCERN with "accounting for" the art-form does not engage with the problem of *seeing* that form in the first place. The kind of observation which art requires is an intimate involvement, an act of partaking, and also an act of being taken. In "The Luxury and Necessity of Painting" (*Three Essays on the Painting of Our Time*, 1961), Adrian Stokes wrote:

> "The great work of art is surrounded by silence. It remains palpably 'out there', yet none the less enwraps us; we do not so much absorb as become ourselves absorbed."

The complementary movements of exploring the inside of the art-object and at the same time being explored oneself, then returned to the outside again, are dramatised by Keats in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn." This "envelopment and incorporation" (Stokes) is the process of artistic cognition. Yet art is often, perhaps usually, not known in an artistic way; as Langer says of the daydreaming listener to music—he goes away with "no musical insight, no new feeling, and actually *nothing heard*."

This is the plight not just of the literary critic encased in a reductive framework, but also of the general reader who finds it difficult to hold in his mind the total art-symbol, which has at some level moved him deeply, in a way which enables real thinking to take place. In terms of real hearing and real seeing, both ideologies and daydreams constitute what Coleridge called "superinduced" preconceptions. The problem lies in the mental restructuring which passionate congruence demands of the percipient. Passion, unlike a single emotion, is inseparable from Form—from pattern, dimensionality, and the organic rhythm which Langer describes as "the preparation of a new event by the ending of a previous one. . . . Everything that prepares a future creates rhythm." In order to align himself with the mystery of the art-symbol, the appreciator has to allow its rhythm—its developmental logic—to carry him into a "new event" in the life of his mind.

Everyone agrees that there are "no rules" for this process of authentic recognition when—in Emily Brontë's words—"the ear begins to hear and the eye begins to see"; when "knowing about" something is (in the words of Wilfred Bion) superseded by "an act of faith in the formless infinite" (*Attention and Interpretation*, 1970). But the mental stance which Keats defined as "negative capability", and which leads to the type of receptive perception poets call inspiration, has been recognised by others as transcending the standard softhumanist polarity of "thought" versus "intuition", and establishing the aesthetic foundation of creative mental activity as a thing-in-itself.

Thus Langer describes the musician who strives to "think music", driven by a sense of "moral obligation towards the Idea": the "Idea" being the "fundamental form of the piece" which makes a live link between composer and performer. Donald Meltzer describes the strenuous anxiety of the analyst who tries to "hold" the patient's dream in his mind while allowing it to "evoke a dream" in himself, rather than immediately interpreting and packaging it: "we should strive to match the poetic diction of the dream . . . with a poetry of our own", by "putting order" not into the dream itself, but into "the confusion in our own minds" (*Dream Life*, 1984). Adrian Stokes stated the problem of creative art criticism in the terms of recalling and holding the "feel" of a dream which is also "the 'feel' of our own structure":

> "Appreciation is a mode of recognition: we recognise but we cannot name, we cannot recall by any effort of will: the contents that reach us in the terms of aesthetic form have the "feel" of a dream that is otherwise forgotten."

Creative "recall" is achieved not by superinducing interpretations, but by describing the "feel" of a work as it takes shape and shapes our own mental structure: following the directives of its deep grammar rather than its academic surface grammar. The viewer who "contemplates and follows out" these dynamic lines which draw him both inside and outside the art-object becomes (Stokes continues) "in touch with a process that seems to be happening on our looking." This process is identification with the commanding form of the art-symbol, the underlying Idea, the governing matrix of passion which directs all its tensions and motifs. In creative criticism the "deep-laid symbol" of Form (Stokes) is *presented*, through an answering symbolic form, rather than substituted by a reductive framework. It is a process not of symptomatic or egocentric self-expression but of self-knowledge in the making.

IN ESSENCE, what the creative critic does is to feed from the artist, in much the same way that Stokes describes Turner feeding and being fed by his painting, "pressed up against the visionary eye" (*Painting and the Inner World*, 1963). He follows the movements of the artist, not in the literal or technical sense of how he painted or wrote it, but in the abstract or essential sense of "thinking the music" of its psychic rhythm. He allows the structure of his mind to develop in response to the governing Idea. In this way he learns to hold the "dream" which is otherwise disturbing and dislocating to a non-reductive mentality.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art's mystery, as opposed to secrecy, responds only to passionate congruence through answering symbolic structures. It requires authentic experience on the part of the appreciator—not in the past, not in the sense of "knowing about", but in the sense of coming-to-knowledge at the time of response. Then each time the mystery becomes "known", vision expands, and the generative guiding function of poetry as the legislature of the world is fulfilled.

Artefacts & Art

Recent Fiction—By D. J. Taylor

"Naturalism" is one of those terms like "avant-garde" or "decadence" which long ago lost their original meaning and now exist simply as synonyms for some form of stylised aberration. It conjures up impressions of strong-minded young women (the type of young women you find in the novels of Theodore Dreiser) weighing up the relative advantages of drudgery and the streets, or pimply-faced clerks contemplating suicide in the gas-fire glow: a sort of sink of gloom and despondency where there is never enough money, and penury or the hangman's noose can be glimpsed nine chapters off. This notion—that naturalism is simply a hypertrophied version of "real life"—has had a depressingly predictable effect on writers; the days when you could *automatically* expect a novel to be a reasonably accurate interpretation of what the author perceived to be everyday existence are long gone.

It is fatal, of course, to accuse novelists of ignoring the real world and equally fatal to assume that naturalism is the best means of approaching that actuality. There are a number of different responses—not all of them terribly efficacious—to this accusation. The art for art's sake lobbyist, who still exists here and there, like a fly trapped in amber, will tell you that the real world is simply not worth considering. The structuralist will inform you that the significations imposed on life by fiction are quite arbitrary and therefore valueless. The postmodernist will explain that the world has grown too complex for the leisured expositions of Dickens and Trollope, and can only be examined obliquely. Of these approaches, the last is the most plausible. It may be that the stagey dialogues of John Fowles's books, with their hints of feminism and the enduring conflict of rationality and disorder, are startlingly relevant. What has to be admitted is that while the modern novel has gained in technical accomplishment—the general level of writing is far higher than it was, say, 50 years ago—its connection with society has almost entirely disappeared.

The slight though genuine merit of Barbara Pym's work has been rather overshadowed by the controversy surrounding the stifling of her career in the early 1960s. By now there can hardly be a reader of the literary weeklies alive who does not know the circumstances of Miss Pym's departure from the Cape list, guided by the spectral hand of Mr Tom Maschler. So aware are we now of this curious neglect of her talents that not even another of A. N. Wilson's withering polemics will reawaken our interest. Here is a further rediscovered novel, dating not from the 1960s when Mr Maschler had stymied her chances of publication but a great deal earlier. *Crampton Hodnet*,[1] written in 1938, explores familiar territory. Perhaps there once was a North Oxford such as Miss Pym describes, whose spinster dwellings resounded to the curate's footsteps and whose young women made well-intentioned *mésalliances*.

The novel's focus is two outwardly respectable homes, that of the Misses Dogget and Morrow, lately enlarged to accommodate Latimer the new curate, and that of Francis Cleveland, a middle-aged don who falls in love with one of his students. Slyly plotted, its action proceeds from a series of evasions: Cleveland's lies to his wife, Latimer's invented excursion to the imaginary Cotswold village of the title as a means of explaining his absence from Evensong. There follows a procession of crises and confrontations, instigated and witnessed by much of North Oxford (whose elderly ladies assemble like a malign Greek chorus at a moment's notice), in which hopes are deflated, normal patterns of behaviour restored: the virginal Miss Bird does not succumb (how could she?); Miss Morrow resists Latimer's offer of marriage. Everything dissolves into anticlimax.

The interest of *Crampton Hodnet*—outwardly the twitterings of spinsters convened to examine the new curate (has there even been a Barbara Pym novel in which spinsters fail to perform this amiable function?)—lies in what emerges occasionally from beneath its surface. Behind the genteel frontage there is a sharper, harsher writer trying to get out. Once in a while Miss Pym's defences drop, and suddenly, with quiet intensity, this bland, amiable exterior is redeemed. To realise, as one is bound to do, that Miss Pym's creations are not perhaps as engaging as they seem is disconcerting: Anthea Cleveland, for instance, who is "not too intelligent but just right for someone whose only occupation in life so far had been to fall in love and be fallen in love with." Her boyfriend Simon is another victim of Miss Pym's asperity.

[1] *Crampton Hodnet*. By Barbara Pym. Macmillan, £8.95

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Men like him "wanted a fine, romantic love to fill in the time when they were not busy with more important things like writing speeches. . . ."

It is unusual to uncover in the same novel such an odd mixture of jauntiness and cynicism. Miss Pym can also be extremely funny: Miss Dogget on the subject of the vicar ("one never hears anything definite said against him") or applying the description "popinjay" to Miss Morrow in her chaste spring dress, or the vicar's wife on a diverting church service ("Old lady Halkin had one of her *turns* and had to be taken out. It was really quite exciting"). She is, unfortunately, a writer whose reputation is liable to be jeopardised by over-enthusiastic admirers (A. L. Rowse appears on the jacket tiresomely extolling "the best novelist of her generation"). Readers who thought that the whole Pym revival was nothing more than a plot got up by Lord David Cecil and A. N. Wilson can venture on into her work without fear of disappointment.

THE ENGLISH SPINSTER NOVEL, a worthy and popular genre, has found a superior exponent in Anita Brookner. Short, understated, their material rigidly controlled, her novels until now have all possessed the same theme: the clever, isolated woman seen in various stages of her life, eyeing her distance in a spirit of rueful self-absorption and examining putative consolations. *Family and Friends*[2] preserves the cool tone while extending the subject-matter. Conducted by an obtrusive narrative voice—which is not above dropping misleading clues into the text—the novel's centre is Sofka, a widowed matriarch who in the years leading up to the Second World War has fashioned solidity out of the "unpromising débris of a European family." An epigraph from Goethe on the conflicting advantages of order and chaos is reflected in the careers of her children, two of whom obey and two of whom dissent from maternal precepts. Following the best traditions of fiction, it is the most dynamic characters who stumble: Frank, "an English aristocrat" who was to have maintained the family firm, slips into the indolent life of a French hotelier; Betty, who was to have brought her precarious charm to the silver screen, ends up as a California pool-lounger with an ailing husband. It is Alfred who takes charge of his father's business, Mimi who is redeemed by a late and fruitful marriage. The whirligig of time brings in its final revenge with Sofka's death.

The strength of Miss Brookner's novel lies not so much in the transplanted mid-European culture it adumbrates (though that is agreeably done) but simply in the way in which it is written. The narrative's deliberation, with its determinist hints—the relevation now of what will happen then—entertains all the more because it is faked. Suggesting lines of development that are not taken up, it continually engages the reader's intelligence: teasing, instructing and—despite its assertion—giving nothing away. Even if you think that the author, for all her apparent switch into new fictional territory, is still busy writing herself into a corner, you can admire her twisting, subtle sentences that bristle with wit and paradox. There is a calm detachment about *Family and Friends*, a disconcerting refusal to be drawn.

ALTHOUGH FRANCIS KING has been writing for over 40 years—the pieces brought together in *One Is A Wanderer*[3] go back to 1949—the themes of his fiction endure. Mr King's impulse stems, I should say, from a conviction of the impossibility of establishing a satisfactory relationship, and also from a deep-rooted disgust of human inadequacy. These stories display a characteristic assortment of second-rate egotists to their worst possible advantage; the terrible family of "Mess", complacent, sponging Eleanor in "Home", the self-centred Japanese professor of "Loss." So painstakingly are human defects conveyed, so sharp are the physical sensations engendered, that you end up hating large parts of the *dramatis personae*: a characteristic, possibly, of all the best-regulated fiction.

It is an oddly narrow perspective, compounded by a uniformity of subject-matter. Mr King specialises: he writes about decaying old queens whose voices can be heard fluting above the chinking glasses; about queer, resourceful old women, psychic phenomena, and inscrutable yet vulnerable orientals. His strength is his dialogue, which reflects the turns and cadences of everyday speech and instantly pins his characters down, conveying their boorishness or irresolution in a few brief sentences. "Sundays" is as representative of Mr King's talent as any. An old woman, staying with her ghastly daughter, son-in-law and grandchild on Lake Como, undertakes an expedition to collect the English newspapers. Brought back, they remain unread: but still she feels a sense of achievement, of small barriers overturned. It is a tiny epiphany.

For all this skill, so cunningly deployed, it is worth asking why—in the light of comparisons with Chekhov—these stories are not quite of the highest quality. The answer lies not in the absence of charity, or in the obvious hooks, or even in the echoes of Maugham and Mansfield, but in the fact that they are almost *too* complete. Writers like Joyce convey in their stories an otherworldliness, the sensation that each story is a pinpoint of light in the centre of nebulous haze. There is about them an air of fragmentation, of randomness which does not exist in Mr King's sharp, tightly-ordered intimations of disgust. However, it is futile to criticise a writer for not being like another writer. Francis King has written some of the finest short stories to have appeared in English since the War. It is a pity that all the collections from which *One Is A Wanderer* is drawn are out of print.

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT John Fowles's fiction—I mean no disrespect—that appeals to the adolescent. I became aware of this when rereading *Daniel Martin*, first discovered in my late teens, and noting (with a certain resignation) the changed response. The appeal has something to do with the

---

[2] *Family and Friends*. By ANITA BROOKNER. Jonathan Cape, £8.95.

[3] *One Is A Wanderer: Selected Stories*. By FRANCIS KING. Hutchinson, £9.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plausible explanations of behaviour, a little to do with the philosophy (for the Jung-men among us), and a lot to do with the sex. Fowles's trick, I think, is to invest adult life with a greater seriousness than it actually possesses. A good example of this is *The Ebony Tower*, full of conversations that seem to reveal everything and in fact reveal nothing very much at all. There is less in this, as Tallulah Bankhead might have said, than meets the eye.

A Maggot[4] takes Fowles back to the 1730s, which, with its shades of Jonathan Wild and Hawser Trunnion, might be thought dangerous ground for the modern novelist. Five travellers are journeying on horseback from London to the West Country: "Mr Bartholomew", his uncle, a maid and manservant, and Dick, a deaf-mute who seems to achieve some form of telepathic contact with his master and who is the only member of the party undisguised. The first section closes with the discovery of Dick's body, hanged, at the spot where the party divided. Subsequently the narrative fragments. A little of it is in the third person, rather more in the form of letters from the lawyer Ayscough to his noble patron, the majority cast as dialogues between Ayscough and people who may be able to reveal what happened.

What did happen? Well, even the shrewd old lawyer is unable to determine precisely what went on in that cave, though it appears to have had something to do with pagan rites designed to cure Mr Bartholomew of his impotence. All that can be stated as fact is that the maid Rebecca, formerly a barren prostitute, conceives and undergoes a religious conversion of the most virulently nonconformist kind. Her stepdaughter, Fowles reveals, will be Ann Lee, founder of the Shaker Sect whose humanity (rather than religiosity) he admires.

This is not the half of it, of course. Among the novel's many themes is Fowles's by now customary reflection on free will. Bartholomew tells Lacy, the actor hired to impersonate his "uncle": "We must choose in many small things . . . but yet must at the end, in great matters, obey." We are also presented with a modern sensibility's conception of the 18th century. This strikes me as artificial, and deliberately so. The contemporary speech is ingeniously done, but in a way that draws attention to its own facility, while the narrative tone becomes mildly officious when describing childbirth statistics or the chemical constituents of Rebecca's make-up. Perhaps the most skilful touches appear in the interrogations, where small facts, let slip unwittingly, illumine wide areas of 18th-century experience: Puddicombe the West Country landlord assuring Ayscough, "I am no fanatick or meeting man"; Lacy describing his career on the boards; the curate (how pleased Miss Pym would be) bemoaning the lack of intelligent company. Despite the large topics it touches on, the book suffers from a lack of narrative purpose. Fundamentally it tells us more about the 20th century's reaction to the 18th century than about the 18th century itself. *Pace* the remarks at the start of this article, I would have preferred illumination of the past, a subject which can only be understood on its own terms.

FINALLY, A PUFF FOR the excellent Carcanet list, which continues to reissue important continental works that have long been out of print on this side of the Channel. *The Poet Assassinated and Other Stories*, though, seems a strange choice for a reprint. According to the blurb, Apollinaire's work[5] emerges "from the long quarrel between tradition and invention, between order and adventure." Its charactistics are a want not so much of restraint, but of any hint of the constant perspective that fiction demands to be built around. The title story—which trails the poet Croniomantal from conception to assassination, describing his proclamation of the freedom of poetry—now seems especially dim. "My dear", Brian Howard is alleged to have said to Maurice Bowra when the *Surréalistes* first appeared on the horizon, "all that they are trying to do is to write without any *effort*, and we all know what that leads to." We do. It leads to stories like "The Blue Eye" and "The Deified Invalid." Somewhat better is "The Moon King", which at any rate is a good idea—the tale of a traveller who discovers a mountain lair containing the bodies of women with whom it is possible to fornicate at any stage of their lives. "The boxes", the traveller realises, "are cemeteries where these necrophiles dig up amorous corpses." But such instances of charm are infrequent, and the translation, by an American, is disagreeable. "Jealousy came out of him the way foam comes out of a wave." Whatever one might say about Apollinaire, he did at least write grammatically.

DINO BUZZATI'S *The Tartar Steppe*,[6] however, is something of a classic. Written when the Italian Fascists were still censoring the literati, it is a story of the military life, veiled in allegory. Giovanni Drogo, newly commissioned, arrives at Fort Bastiano on his country's northernmost frontier, where nothing ever happens and the enemy never attacks. Almost immediately he wants to escape, but the place exercises a strange fascination—even his leaves in the city are oddly unsatisfactory—and he lingers on into his fifties, a discontented and disillusioned old soldier. By a swingeing stroke of irony, when the Tartar enemy does attack he falls ill and has to be taken back to civilisation where "the worst is over and they cannot cheat you again."

Composed in a sparse, measured style and infinitely suggestive, the novel has something to do with states of mind and the way in which they change. Giovanni consoles himself with the thought that back in the city his mother will at least keep his bedroom intact; "but she was wrong in thinking that she could keep intact a state of happiness which was gone forever or hold back the flight of time, wrong in imagining that when her son came back and the doors and windows were reopened everything would be as before." Using structuralist jargon, one might almost say that Buzzati is concerned with arbi-

[4] *A Maggot*. By JOHN FOWLES. Jonathan Cape, £9.95.

[5] *The Poet Assassinated and Other Stories*. By GUILLAUME APOLLINIARE. Translated by RON PADGETT. Carcanet, £7.95.

[6] *The Tartar Steppe*. By DINO BUZZATI. Translated by STUART HOOD. Carcanet, £9.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trary significations; the way in which Captain Angustina is remembered as a hero despite his ignoble death, another officer's complaint that "once it was a honour, Fort Bastiano, now it almost seems to be a punishment." The military life, bedevilled by contradictory regulations—Giovanni's initial attempts to get a transfer lead him into labyrinths of red tape—is Kafkaesque.

Spare, but eloquent, Buzzati touches on elemental topics, those of the wide spaces, the vast horizons and what they conceal, as well as aiming some deft kicks in the direction of totalitarianism. This is a small masterpiece: its modern equivalent might be a book like Coetzee's *Waiting For The Barbarians*. Even more important are the circumstances of the composition. It is not a bad thing to be reminded the deprivation, war and censorship are still unable to prevent the emergence of great art.

AUTHORS

Paul Henze is an author and diplomat who has specialised in Ethiopian and Turkish affairs, and has published many scholarly articles on the Horn of Africa. He was an assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski on the US National Security Council Staff from 1977-80, during President Carter's Administration. Since then he has been a Wilson Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, and is now a resident consultant at the RAND Corporation in Washington, D.C. His previous contribution to ENCOUNTER, "Quest for an Assassin: Mehmet Ali Agca", appeared in the May 1983 issue. His book *Ethiopian Journeys* appeared in 1977 (Ernest Benn), and *The Plot to Kill the Pope* (Croom Helm) in 1983.

Daniel Weissbort's new and selected poems—*Leaseholder*—are to be published this autumn by Carcanet Press.

Norman Levine's latest collection of short stories is *Champagne Barn*, a Penguin original, published in the USA last November by Viking Penguin. Among his other books are *Canada Made Me*, *From a Seaside Town*, *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well*, and *Thin Ice*. His story "Django, Karfunkelstein, & Roses" appeared in the December 1985 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Max Beloff, Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79, was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent books are *Wars and Welfare: Britain 1914-1945* (Edward Arnold, 1984), and, as co-author, *Government of the United Kingdom* (Weidenfeld, 1985).

Richard Poole, Tutor in English Literature at Coleg Harlech, has published two volumes of poetry and edited two collections of work by Richard Hughes. His critical biography of Hughes is to be published this year by Poetry Wales Press.

Lawrence Sail's next book of poems, *Devotions*, will be published next January by Secker & Warburg.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph*. *Hummingbirds and Hyenas*, a second volume of his satirical sketches of Parliamentary personalities, was published in 1985 by Faber and Faber.

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Neil Berry recently completed his thesis for London University on the subject of *The Edinburgh Review*. His literary criticism appears in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Literary Review*, and *London Magazine*; his most recent article in ENCOUNTER was "Stepping Eastward" (May).

Rüdiger Görner is Lecturer in European area studies, Department of Linguistic and International Studies, University of Surrey. His poetry, essays, and fiction have been published in German, and he contributes to various magazines and radio programmes in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. His study *The Diary in Literature* was published this spring by Winkler/Artemis (Munich and Zurich); his review of Anna Dostoevsky's diary, *Journey to the West*, appeared in the May 1986 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Meg Harris Williams is a freelance writer and artist. Her book *Inspiration in Milton and Keats* was published in 1982 by Macmillan, and her study of Emily Brönte, *A Strange Way of Killing*, will be published later this year by Clunie Press. In June, Hutchinson are to bring out the late Roland Harris's *Poetry For You*, of which she is co-editor.

D. J. Taylor, a recent graduate of St John's College, Oxford, works in London as a copywriter. His literary work has appeared in various literary and more general magazines; his novel *Great Eastern Land* was published earlier this year by Secker & Warburg.

Herb Greer is an American playwright and author who has lived in Europe since the early 1950s. His previous contributions to ENCOUNTER include "Pravda: A Play about the Press" (September-October 1985), "Terrorism & the Media" (August 1982), and "The Man on the Ledge" (August-September 1980).

D. J. Enright was Professor of English at the University of Singapore from 1960-70, Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER 1970-72, and a Director of Chatto & Windus 1974-82. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1981 by Oxford University Press, for whom he also edited *The Oxford Book of Contemporary Verse*, *The Oxford Book of Death*, and *Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism*. His novel *Academic Year* was re-issued by Buchan & Enright in 1984.

Roy Kerridge is the author of a novel, *Druid Madonna* (Brynmill, 1983); his non-fiction work about West Indians in England, *Real Wicked, Guy*, was followed last autumn by *Bizarre Britain: A Calendar of Eccentricity* (Blackwell, 1983, 1985), and a volume of autobiography, *Lone Conformist*, was published in 1984 by Chatto & Windus. His previous contributions to ENCOUNTER were "The Front Line Dog" (April 1984) and "Magic in Islington" (January 1986).

Julius Gould was Professor of Sociology at Nottingham University until 1982; in 1983 he was appointed Director of Research at the Institute for Policy Research. He is also Director of the Social Affairs Unit. Among his writings are *The Attack on Higher Education* (1977) and *Jewish Identity* (1984).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books Encountered

The Impact of Civilian Evacuation in the Second World War. By TRAVIS L. CROSBY. Croom Helm, £16.95.

Fascinating account, by a Professor of History at Wheaton College, Mass., of the great UK upheaval, showing how the failure of voluntarism paved the way for social planning which culture-contact (and conflict) encouraged. A double eye-opener for Disraeli's two nations.

A Short History of Irish Literature. By SEAMUS DEANE. Hutchinson, £15.

Samuel Beckett, Elizabeth Bowen, Edmund Burke, Maria Edgeworth, Oliver Goldsmith, George Moore, Bernard Shaw, Sheridan, Swift, Wilde—you see what anomalies patriotism involves. But this is a good, sensible survey of its ambivalent field, despite the omission of C. Day Lewis and others.

The Late Victorians: Art, Design and Society, 1852-1910. By BERNARD DENVIR. Longman, £7.50.

Teeming fourth and final volume of the author's *Documentary History of Taste in Britain*, dovetailing contemporary sources into an annotated anthology leading from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to Roger Fry, with sidelights on models, the market, houses, and interior design.

The Peoples of Ireland: From Prehistory to Modern Times. By LIAM DE PAOR. Hutchinson Notre Dame, £15.

Comprehensive history, best in its early archaeological phases, rather bland and cursory on "modern times", on which the author's *Divided Ulster* is more forthright. The notes could be fuller; but the illustrations help.

Letters to the Press. By ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE. Compiled with an Introduction by JOHN MICHAEL GIBSON and RICHARD LANCELYN GREEN. Secker & Warburg, £15.

Not quite "Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells", but distantly related. Doyle (not in Professor Deane's *History*, above) was an assiduous quodlibetarian, attacking among other things Sinn Fein, injustice, tax-dodging, and opponents of the Channel Tunnel. Rather rudimentary, my dear Watson.

Samuel Beckett: Nayman of Noland. By RICHARD ELLMANN. Library of Congress, free of charge.

"Like salamanders we survive in his fire", writes Professor Ellmann in this elegant and learned 80th-birthday-tribute lecture, with subtitle from Joyce, and illustrations including Buster Keaton. Come to think of it, those parameters fit the clowning tragedian.

Marching over Africa. By FRANK EMERY. Hodder & Stoughton, £12.95.

Based like the author's earlier *The Red Soldier* on Victorian soldiers' letters home, this extends the field from the 1879 Zulu War to a whole series of campaigns and battles, from Tel-el-Kebir to Ladysmith, from Abyssinia to Ashantiland. Heroism, insouciance, brutality, and retrospective shame.

Long Knives and Short Memories: The Spandau Prison Story. By JACK FISHMAN. Souvenir Press, £15.95.

Well pieced-together account of the seven leading Nazis imprisoned after the Nuremberg trial, based on smuggled letters and photographs, interviews with relatives and other contacts, etc. Enlarges on the author's *The Seven Men of Spandau* (1954), but omits important recent work on Nuremberg, including that of the Tusas.

Agate. By JAMES HARDING. Methuen, £12.95.

Brisk, accomplished, frank biography of the Manchester cotton merchant, homosexual, workoholic, Micawberish big spender, and diarist who became the Clive Barnes of the London theatre-reviewing world. Less elegant than Beerbohm, less witty than Tynan, at his best he was perceptive; at his worst, cruel. More quotations would have helped.

Last Days of the Reich: The Collapse of Nazi Germany, May 1945. By JAMES LUCAS. Arms and Armour Press, £12.95.

Harrowing, meticulous account of the chaotic, *very* last days of Hitler's empire, with more than 100 bleak and telling photographs. The effect is to make the triumph feel like a tragedy.

Indian Country. By PETER MATTHIESSEN. Collins Harvill, £12.95.

Angry, eloquent, well-mapped but unindexed plea for America's aboriginals, based on travels and talks with Indian people, taking up where Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* left off, and documenting the savage evils of "progress."

Victorian Autobiography. By LINDA H. PETERSON. Yale University Press, £20.

Thoughtful study of what the author, an associate professor of English at Yale, calls the "hermeneutic" aspect of autobiography, interpreting rather than presenting. She begins with Bunyan, and continues with Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman, Harriet Martineau, and Edmund Gosse. Some might call it "autopsychography."

George Orwell: The Age's Adversary. By PATRICK REILLY. Macmillan, £27.50.

Eloquent but unsurprising account of Orwell as the accountant revealing liberal society's ethical bankruptcy after living off the capital accumulated by religion and moral philosophy, with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an heroic cautionary tale hoping against hope to make itself redundant.

The Railway Station: A Social History. By JEFFREY RICHARDS and JOHN M. MACKENZIE. Oxford University Press, £15.

Loving, massive, well-illustrated compendium of "public meeting-places where faith in the perfectibility of man by his own ingenuity and the blessing of a divine providence was daily affirmed." The filmography oddly omits *Stazione Termini*, De Sica's disastrous weepie, where it wasn't.

At the Dawn of Tyranny: The Origins of Individualism, Political Oppression, and the State. By ELI SAGAN. Faber, £17.50.

The Rousseauesque title conceals a more Meadian book: a study of the "primitive" cultures found in Buganda by Speke and Stanley and in Hawaii and Tahiti by Cook, and the ways in which equivocal "civilisation" moved in. Was Rousseau right?

Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives. By CAROLYN STEEDMAN. Virago, £3.95.

Discursive, digressive, upwardly mobile worm's-eye-view of working-class childhoods—the author's and her mother's—aching with regrets and longings, plus resentment at Labour's "eschewal of socialism in favour of welfare philanthropism."

Wordsworth: Play and Politics. By JOHN TURNER. Macmillan, £25.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive"—but the light of common day was painful. Dr Turner explores Wordsworth's psychology in adjusting to disappointment and reassessment of his youthful political hopes, revealed in poems between 1787 and 1800. A worthy, modest, intelligently radical book.

The Road to Zimbabwe: 1890-1980. By ANTHONY VERRIER. Cape, £16.

Well-documented and heterodox history, arguing that Britain's granting of independence was reluctant, not liberal, and that the wrongs committed by Mugabe's Government, and admitted by the author, need to be seen in the context of growing land hunger and nearby, still powerful South Africa.

Maestro Segovia. Compiled and edited by GRAHAM WADE. Robson Books, £7.95.

Delightful collection of *obiter dicta*. "The guitar is like a tiny orchestra, seen through the wrong end of a pair of binoculars." "I speak French like a native of Paris, English with difficulty, and German only in self-defence." "Abstract painting and concrete music! Both are denials of true art!" Ah well, he's 93.

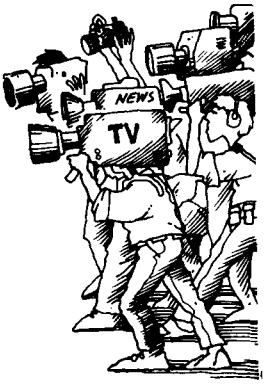
R.M.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRESS

The News Managers

By Herb Greer



MANIPULATION of the media, so-called news management, is very old—older even than Saul's thousands and David's ten thousands. The earliest versions of the sport seem to have been a normal facet of the priestly or governing ritual, quite respectable and taken for granted as a means to preserve the name and fame of rulers or gods through time into eternity. Anyone with a taste for savouring the activity of those days can stroll through the Assyrian and Egyptian exhibits of the British Museum and see it preserved in stone.

Today the media, like religion, have become less important in the eternal context than in the urgent and noisy hallways of the here and now. *Réclame* is no longer a luxury to be created and shaped by Gods or Emperors and their lackeys, but a banausic necessity to the common man in almost every field of human endeavour, from the economic process through politics to warfare. This means trying to influence, coerce, bribe, or (if one is lucky) interest the modern successors to stone-gravers, scribes, and literate priests—the journalists.

In most of the world the species remains to a great extent what it was in ancient times, responsible primarily to the powers that be and their henchmen, in the style currently approved or demanded by UNESCO. In the Western world and among those influenced by its values, things are different. The journalist is not content to serve in the manner of his forebears; he himself demands a share in the old hieratic izzat, a benefit of clergy and status apart from and prior to all other professions, equivalent if not superior to those who govern. Like the old clerics and clerisy they are pleased to appear as carriers of (hidden) truth among their fellow human beings, as a club of mediators between reality and the deluded dreamers who make up the rest of mankind. This illusion is also fostered by many sensible and weighty people outside the profession, who speak flatteringly of the "power" of the media who "form our symbolic environment."[1] It is a recognition that media professionals, while complaining bitterly of "news management" by others, have their own particular and collective interests in shaping what they transmit; that they indulge those interests and defend the indulgence, just as any pressure group defends its exercise of privilege.

Because of this the "power" of our media is an important issue. In the real as opposed to the rhetorical world, power is the ability to compel obedience, most often through a sense of legitimate authority or fear. The serious media-professional, full of ideas about "the Fourth Estate" and all that, does aspire to just such power, speaking with the air of a politician, a representative of "the People" with consequent political authority. In a totalitarian or other tyrannical system, where the journalist is an *apparatchik* of government, he may have a share in its authority. In the democratic world, though journalists may be influential, they are not like that. Machiavelli's distinction between Prince and private citizen still holds good, even when "the Prince" is elected.[2] Our ritualistic contempt for politicians does not cancel out the fact that they *rule* with electoral consent, backed by a strong fabric of established custom. This makes the electorate look to them with genuine expectations, including the hope or the demand for the solution of problems which might make God Almighty hesitate a while. No such expectations or hopes attach to the media professionals; the best they can manage is the role of popular orator, sometimes rising to the office of lynch-mob leader.[3] In these roles, however, they can and do influence popular expectations, usually swelling them up beyond reason (most often regarding the power of government to control the economy).

Much, perhaps most, discussion of media "power" rides on the assumption that the public is a homogeneous, passive, and infinitely malleable chunk of human clay. The obvious truth is that this "mass", like the media profession, is made up of individuals, each with a bag of metaphysical tools. The "symbolic environment" is formed by shared use of these tools within and between both groups, with the public by no means always on the receiving end of the action. This can be a healthy process in a free society, but it does have its pathological side. The public-media dialogue contains an element of conceptual and linguistic entropy, in which convenient but sloppy usages are taken up, reinforced, and then frozen. Thus an important area of political awareness can be badly blurred—as in the current use of "peace" in public and media discourse. This entropy helps pressure groups to exploit the media, and enables journalists or editors, for reasons of their own, to exacerbate and deploy the emotions of pressure groups and public alike.

This manipulation can descend to the use of blunt falsehood;[4] but with so many competing journalists waiting to

[1] Cf. Jeane Kirkpatrick in ENCOUNTER, November 1983.

[2] *The Prince*, Ch. IX, "The Constitutional Principality." Some politicians flatter the media accordingly, some do not. Many British journalists are hostile to Mrs Thatcher because she treats them like journalists instead of, presumably, like Cabinet members.

[3] As in Watergate, in the Parkinson affair, and in others where embarrassing publicity loomed large.

[4] Even *The Times* can print a lie. See the issue of 16 September 1983, where Robert Fisk wrote of "imaginary" terrorists in the Sabra and Chatila camps before the notorious Lebanese massacre of Palestinians. In fact the presence of gunmen, firing on Israelis, was well attested in both visual and printed media. A November 1981 *TV Eye* report on Czech dissidents contained false statements which caused serious trouble for the subjects of the report in Czechoslovakia.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

catch each other out, this is relatively rare today, and seldom very effective. Journalists in general prefer to work *on* the truth rather than against it. Some of their techniques (e.g. the atrocity story) are older than writing itself. For this and other gambits, still pictures can be printed with the sort of headline or caption that makes literacy a moot point. Stories can be warped or slanted by selectivity, by the use of adjectives to heighten or damp down a particular point ("alleged", "so-called"), by placement in column or on the page, by the use of type-face, frequency of appearance, or by illustrations which reinforce or contradict what is printed. In the visual medium, journalists have learned to operate with a sophistication undreamed of by the scribes and scribbling monks who were their forebears. They can bypass literacy altogether in the violent, abreactive idiom of moving pictures coupled with sound. This offers enormous scope for the jigging-and-poking of news and documentary material, with cinematic tricks of montage or juxtaposition that push the viewer's emotions where the reporter or presenter wants them to go. He uses variations in the lengths of shot; conducts prompting interviews which lead the subject into views and vocabulary preferred by the *engagé* reporter; inserts "talking heads" to present an apparent balance of opposing views (but offering a less attractive spokesman for the view which producer, editor, and presenter wish to denigrate); goes in for prosecutory questioning which forces self-incrimination; films emotionally powerful images to overwhelm reasoned argument.[5]

ALL THE MEDIA—print, aural, and visual—manipulate reportage with a kind of voodoo language, in which certain terms are employed to give the material force and direction, often in an attempt to compel political action, or to establish some kind of guilt. Like the lawyer presenting a brief, the reporter or presenter works by raising a good old cause (peace; human and other "rights"; jobs; accountability; united Ireland; self-determination; a "homeland", etc.)—or some awful villainy (racism; unemployment; "loss of hope"; hunger; conspiracies in commerce or politics; deprivation; police brutality; "cuts" in public spending; poverty, etc.) into the forefront of the judging public's attention. If there are awkward complications hanging on behind the plausible façade, these are skimped, obscured, or simply ignored. (An example of this is the tribal complexity among black South Africans. Most reportage of the troubles there presents the situation as a simple Black-White dichotomy.)

The voodoo-prosecutor approach is particularly favoured in British and American media treatment of the conflict between the American government and the Marxist-Leninist junta which runs Nicaragua. The example is interesting because it displays all the techniques I have mentioned, plus one or two others. It is also an instance of journalists working as ideological lobbyists to influence foreign policy rather than as the informants they claim to be. The primary villains are the "*Contra*" forces which are invariably described in Britain as "CIA-" or "American-backed", while mention of Soviet or Cuban backing for the Sandinistas is deliberately omitted or put in more anodyne terms. Questioned about this, BBC news executive John Wilson admitted that much British media reporting is under the influence of "small-*l* liberalism." He excused the differently slanted treatment of "backing" for *Contras* and Sandinistas on the grounds that Soviet support for the Junta is "not a readily examinable policy", while CIA support for the *Contras* is "confidently asserted." This sophistry is endorsed by others (eg. ITN news editor Norman Rees) to justify the open prejudice of reporting on Central America.

In one notable media variant, certain faults of the Sandinistas—censorship, suppression of civil liberties, harsh economic measures, the largest armed force in the region—are freely admitted; but this is not connected with the patterns of increasingly totalitarian power of Marxist-Leninist régimes everywhere else. They are said to be something special, due to harassment by the *Yanquis* through their *Contra* surrogates. Pro-Sandinista reporters like *The Observer*'s Hugh O'Shaughnessy deny that the Sandinistas are really Marxist-Leninist at all—at least not in "the style of Czechoslovakia." After O'Shaughnessy made this statement on the BBC religious programme *Sunday*, I asked him if he would make the more relevant comparison with Castro's Cuba. He declined on the voodoo ground that it would be "simplistic." He did not explain why the comparison with more distant Czechoslovakia was not simplistic.

Sunday, theological as it is supposed to be, has on several occasions given air-time to pro-Sandinista nuns (atrocity stories about the *Contras*). Hugh Kay, editor of the Catholic magazine *The Month*, defending the Pelagian "Liberation Theology" on television, has insisted that Nicaragua under the Sandinistas is "free." He said to me that the Sandinistas "give Christianity concrete form in working toward reconstruction of the social order. . . ." BBC TV's *Heart of the Matter*, purporting to explore the ethical aspects of the conflict, portrayed it as a simple result of Reaganite hostility; but it omitted any mention of earlier US aid to the Sandinistas—$118 million over two years, more than Somoza received in two decades. Notice of this obviously might have entailed an explanation of why it was stopped—namely, the huge increase in Nicaraguan armed forces while help was still coming from the US government; suppression of domestic opposition during the same period; subversion in other Central American countries, also during the same period. Presenter David Jessel concentrated instead on the Sandinista claim that *Contras* engage in a policy of systematic atrocities against civilians. His interview of a US State Department official, who denied this, was prosecutory; it was marked by phrases like "Oh, come *on*!" The official's denial of the charge included a remark that atrocities do take place in all such wars. It was edited to make it look like a *de facto* admission which contradicted the denial, muffling any suggestion that *Contra* atrocities were not at all the systematic sort adduced by the Sandinistas.

[5] Psychologists hold that visual techniques affect the right hemisphere and sub-cortical structures of the viewer's brain, making resistance or correction by pre-existing or subsequent verbal information—lodged in the left hemisphere—more difficult than the simple refutation of argument.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On 12 March 1982 Jon Snow of ITN made Sandinista foreign-office material part of a straight news-broadcast, not acknowledging the source. The material was contentious and inaccurate, but the ordinary viewer had no way of knowing this. Channel 4 News has employed an active anti-American specialist as an adviser on Central America.[6] The same channel broadcast a month-long weekly series of one-hour documentaries on Nicaragua, all of them heavily pro-Sandinista. Granada's *World in Action* (25 November 1985) dealt with the children fighting for the Sandinistas and for the *Contras*, implying a balanced view of both sides. The Sandinista kids were shown as taking up arms purely in revenge for parents murdered by the *Contras*; they defended their poor little farms, ploughing with a gun on one shoulder; they were shown as very well-informed about the dangers, and cheerfully accepting the risks of what they were doing. None was shown wounded (though casualties were mentioned in the commentary). The *Contra* children were almost all "kidnapped"; forced into service under hideous conditions; never told about the risks of combat; sent as innocents into Nicaragua to be killed or wounded. (There was plenty of footage of wounded children in crude field hospitals.) The message of the "balanced" documentary was clear: the Sandinistas and their brave child volunteers were struggling against a band of criminals who ruthlessly kidnapped frightened kids and used them as cannon fodder.

For years there has been a steady drip of pro-Sandinista and (in this context) anti-American reporting in the British media, complemented by an equivalent—anti-Reagan rather than anti-American—from "liberal" editors and reporters across the Atlantic. But the US-Nicaragua clash is not unique in attracting such *engagé* attention. On the Arab-Israeli war Robert Fisk of *The Times* has been conspicuously pro-Arab and anti-Israeli in the tone and content of his reportage. In the Middle East the Western media generally have taken pains to truckle to the militant Arab factions—for instance, concealing their violent intimidation of Western journalists during the Israeli siege of Beirut (which would account for a good deal of the pro-Arab bias of so much reporting at the time), while condemning the Israelis for "news management" and "censorship."[7] The British and American media have presented IRA and INLA terrorists less like criminals than as members of a legitimate opposition party, on the excuse of "informing the public about their case"—as if this case (the demand for a United Ireland) were not already known *ad nauseam* to the public.[8]

THESE AND MANY OTHER instances have to be seen in the light of journalists' insistence that they are impartial or "independent" observers—mere passive messengers who record events and pass them on. Of course no one, not even the journalistic profession, really believes this any more, if they ever did. Certainly wider sectors of the public do know better, by now. So much evidence has piled up to prove that in the media, no less than in physics, Heisenberg's famous Uncertainty Principle operates with a vengeance. Now and again a media defender will admit that the very act of coverage does influence events. Paul Friedman (London Bureau Chief of the American Broadcasting Company), did this in trying to justify his company's exploitation of hostages during the TWA hijacking in Beirut. It was "arguable", he said, that (ABC) television actually helped to get the hostages released sooner than they might have been without the coverage. Indeed, it is equally "arguable" that the possibility and then the fact of coverage, plus the eagerness of companies like ABC to deal with terrorists (an eagerness which was very apparent in Beirut), created the necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for this hijack and others, and that the ensuing publicity prolonged and *worsened* the agony of the hostages and their families. In either case the media stand convicted as admittedly active agents, with their "mere messenger" claim exposed as nonsense.

It is clear that the media are not "used" or "managed" solely by governments and special-interest groups outside the profession. Journalists and editors on the inside take part in the activity as well. They defend this in various ways, as with this peculiar definition of journalism:

> "Journalism is not a profession. It is the exercise by occupation of the right to free expression available to every citizen."[9]

This is, of course, wordy waffle; but interesting because it aims to cast a verbal spell, levitating journalists on to a vaguely democratic height. The idea is to place them above the *un*democratic professionals like doctors, scientists, university lecturers, lawyers—and, naturally, elected politicians—while conferring on journalists honorary membership in the mass of the common people who surge along below these élites. Thus the élitarian wagon-train is democratically surrounded by the valiant journalists. The "Bennspeak" verbal mummery is not the exclusive property of the Left but of a wide selection of politicians and academics who agree that journalism has a special status, a condition of what might be called social celibacy: of, and yet outside, society. When journalists insist on this they tend to pontificate loudly about "rights": "the people's right to

---

[6] Jenny Pearce of the Latin America Bureau, a publishing and research house largely dedicated to anti-Yankee propagandising. Miss Pearce's book on Latin America, *Under the Eagle*, highly selective and extremely hostile to the US, has been used as source material by British journalists reporting on Central America.

[7] See *Commentary* (January 1983) for a detailed account of this by Kenneth R. Timmerman. In the spring of that year I wrote to *The Times* about his report; the letter was unprinted. Journalists in Beirut during the siege had to carry a press pass, issued by the Palestinian agency WAFA, for safe conduct. Those who reported facts unfavourable to the Arab side did not get the pass. When I asked whether Robert Fisk carried it, *The Times* refused to discuss the question.

[8] An egregious instance of this was the famous BBC TV interview with an INLA terrorist shortly after this cabal had murdered Airey Neave at the House of Commons. Richard Francis, head of BBC TV News at the time, still defends this interview.

[9] Geoffrey Robertson, *People Against the Press* (1983). The words are Mr Robertson's, like the populist title. But the idiom is characteristic of Tony Benn; hence the term "Bennspeak" (see below).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know"; "the right to free speech" (or, as above, "expression"); or "the right to enlighten democratic choice." The first two of these formulae mean, in practice, the journalist's privilege of saying anything he or she likes to the public *with impunity*, even if this is like shouting "FIRE!" in a crowded theatre; even when it extends to *de facto* support for a cabal whose aim is the destruction of rights; even when it means the arbitrary ruin of a private citizen or public official, for no better reason than the feeding of trivial (but journalistically lucrative) quidnunckery.

THE THIRD CATCHPHRASE, about "informing democratic choice", moots the question of whether media professionals actually *mean* to function simply as informants, or whether they are stepping covertly into the game of professional politics. Are they informing or are they persuading with their shaped information, using resources not available to "every citizen"? Some of what they use for persuasion is doubtless solid and useful and, let us say, democratically salutary. Some of it is trumpery, selective to the point of mendacity, politically malicious or damaging in an interested way, prejudiced, slanted, and harmful to the public interest in the way that it is trimmed up and passed on.

The professional defence of this is that any kind of information must be available, however partial or deliberately warped, because without all of it, good and bad, voters cannot judge what is true and what is not, and thus make the decisions that affect their lives. There are several answers to this. One is that "all" of the information is never available. The question is not one of reporting the "truth" but about the selection process, who operates it, why, and in whose interests. This bears heavily on the public's perception of what is true and what is not, and has to do with the orienting or "tribal" function of the media.

For most people the world is not chaotic, but is understood within a scheme of received ideas. When this scheme is disrupted the effect is painful and outraging. With a sense of their audience, editors and journalists in the printed medium are likely to avoid this, selecting and presenting their material accordingly. Fans of *The Guardian* or the *Daily Mail* or *The Observer* are more likely to find confirmation of their views in the paper of choice than to find anything that will radically alter them. Despite polls indicating public scepticism about journalists in general, a reader is thus liable to believe rather than reject out of hand what *his* newspaper contains—whatever is said by those who like to sneer at the press.

This should not be taken to mean that the Western press is a congeries of small-scale *Pravda*s or *Völkischer Beobachter*s, pandering exclusively to special interest groups, parties, or sections of the community. We do have such publications.[10] But what I am describing amounts to a bespoke tailoring of news and comment in major outlets, but with a selection of news that is generally wider and richer than that found under systems with official censors; this includes the freedom to *épater* readers, government, or anyone else if the editors and journalist think it useful or necessary. Yet this also includes the freedom to comfort, flatter, or cater to prejudice with a nudge and a wink: for example, the way that President Reagan is reported and caricatured in, say, *The Observer*, which is calculated to appeal to the crudest anti-American sentiments among readers. In the British press the hostile coverage of Mark Thatcher's part in an Omani government contract provided a perfect instance of using simple news to mount a political attack. Without clear proof (but noting that Mrs Thatcher had helped to secure the contract for a British company), newspapers and TV hinted darkly at nepotistic corruption without actually making open accusations.

Bias on radio and television appears to arise from a personal conviction as to what they *ought* to believe. In "documentaries" (really tracts and pamphlets using audio-visual material) by journalists like Jon Pilger or Jonathan Dimbleby—and occasionally in news feature spots like the BBC's *Panorama* or ITV's *TV Eye, Diverse Reports*, or *World in Action*, and even in the "straight" news broadcasts like *Channel 4 News* or *Independent Television News* or *Newsnight* on BBC 2—the ingredient of manipulation appears as more overt, and the *parti pris* attitude more obvious. The reporting of the troubles in Ulster has often cast doubt on the deep-down attitudes of certain reporters and producers to terrorism. A great deal of television coverage of the "H-Block" hunger-strikes, for example, with powerful images of demonstrations and men starving themselves to death, gave a lurid impression of widespread popular support for the Provisional IRA in Ulster. Also, with interviews and in the tone of coverage, it gave an air of political legitimacy to the "men of blood."[11] The viewer may sense partiality in coverage of that kind; but the resultant loss in credibility can be compensated (or even cancelled out) by the illusion of immediate reality and the powerful cerebral effect of visual images.

WHERE DOES THIS leave the man-in-the-street, the voter, the citizen who is being informed, or persuaded, or manipulated? Does it impair his ability to make the "decisions which affect his life"? Isn't democracy being usurped by the hidden influence of a Fourth Estate which, unlike the Third, has been elected by nobody? To some extent, surely—but only to the extent that the electorate in a democracy really operates solely on the basis of media-supplied information. However, even in the relationship between media and public I have described above, this is rather unlikely, at least in any sustained and general sense.[12] On immediate single issues the conclusion would probably be different. But it is worth remembering that in our political life voters make very few of

[10] E.g. The Communist *Morning Star*, the neo-fascist *Bulldog*, the unilateralist *Sanity*, the "ethnic" *Race Today*, the loony-Left *Militant*, etc., etc.

[11] See my "Terrorism and the Media" (in the August 1982 ENCOUNTER). As I pointed out then, terrorists and journalists have certain interests in common (the Big Story and getting it on the Front Page); and this affects the way terrorism is reported in the highly competitive context of the media.

[12] But see Thomas Sowell, *Knowledge and Decisions* (1980), p. 38: "In political competition accurate knowledge has no decisive, competitive advantage, because what is being 'sold' is not an end result but a plausible belief about a complex process."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the decisions which affect their lives. They elect and pay politicians to make them, reserving under the prevailing constitutional system the right to turn out the office-holders if what they do becomes too upsetting.

Politicians do not, any more than voters, make their decisions on the basis of media-supplied information; but it can sway them through its possible effect on their electoral chances. Bearing in mind the *Belgrano* affair (and, more recently, the way both sides of the Westland Helicopter Company battle worked through the media), it is clear that politicians, with electoral and other considerations in mind, will use whatever influence they can muster, including administrative authority, to shape information before (and even after) a story reaches the media professionals. It seems obvious enough that the attitude of the professionals to a given politician and/or his party, plus the other special interests of journalists themselves, will help to determine what form the information takes and how it is expressed by *the time it reaches the public. The relationship between an* enlightened democracy and Jeffersonian "free expression" for journalists is neither so clear-cut nor so clean as our Fourth Estate likes to pretend. On the contrary it can be obscure, not to say positively dirty—for the special interests of journalists are like those of any other exclusive group in one important respect: they will not always coincide with the public interest. I mean to discuss the implications for this for media freedom in further pieces on censorship and the ethics of journalism.

From an Urban Bestiary

1. House Mouse

The picture on the box the trap came in
is a travesty. Your fur is a beautiful grey,
eyes polished jet and whiskers amazingly long.
You are the only wild life we have seen this year
and we have slaughtered you.

2. White Fly

You are so numerous you have no singular.
When we put out the tomato plants in a polythene bag
we hoped we'd seen the last of you.
You beat against the clear plastic
like a perpetual motion confetti.

3. Bull

Even from the car we can see
you are bad-tempered,
as if you're fed up at being got at
for treating cows as sexual objects.
Cheer up, old bull. Think of the Ministry's stud bulls,
Artificial inseminators, making love to sexless objects.

4. Blue Bottle

What is so disgusting about your bulky bustle
is that you may not be insignificantly squashed
like a mite.

5. Go Go Lion

Our local strip-tease artist's lion
brought the reporters in
when it peeped over the wall at a neighbour hanging washing.
Gentle as a kitten the owner protested, but they never are.
Also, she has a python for her act.

Robert Crozier

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LANGUAGE

Acoustical Excitation

Truth, Beauty & Bafflegab—By D. J. Enright

There's a lot of amusement, instruction and alarm to be had from *Newspeak*,[1] albeit the title is something of a misnomer. Orwell's "Newspeak" entailed a reduction of vocabulary, as an aid to a reduction of thought, whereas Jonathon Green's version illustrates an extension of vocabulary pointing to an increase of thought, or knowledge, or supposition, whether admirable or otherwise. The hectoring and deceit in evidence at least cancel out ideologically. Green includes expressions that are ironic or subversive in tendency—something not found in the official language of Oceania—as well as the unexceptionable jargon of trades and professions. Thus *boom corridor*: supersonic flight path—and *accelerated history*: testing aircraft components through ageing by artificial stress.

Outside the admonitory slogans of Soviet Russia and China, the closest this book comes to Orwell is in its nastier euphemisms. *ABC warfare* is not ructions in the primary classroom but Atomic, Biological and Chemical weaponry. (Nor is *absolute dud* a term to be seen on school reports; it indicates the absence of one—a nuclear weapon that fails to explode on target.) *Accidental delivery* isn't having someone else's groceries left on your doorstep, but the shelling of one's own troops. *Anticipatory retaliation* is double-think or "*bafflegab*" for surprise attack; and Bambi stands for Ballistic Missile Boost Intercept, an orbiting satellite intended to destroy hostile ground installations. In Argentina *a chat with Susan* denotes a session of torture by electricity (how does it go in Spanish, one wonders, and why?), though *happy talk* (US) is the style of news broadcasting in which "all topics, however grave or disturbing, are given a jokey, lighthearted veneer", much the same as *infotainment*, a mixture lower on information than on entertainment.

First Australians is not a value-free way of referring to convicts but means the Aboriginals. *Bent spear* is US emergency code for an incident involving a nuclear device, less serious than an *accident* (q.v., but I couldn't find it). *Heavy textiles* are not overcoats but mailbags sewn by hand in Her Majesty's prisons, whereas *knitting* (Royal Navy) means girls or girl-friends. In espionage circles *biographic leverage* implies the use of personal indiscretions for blackmail purposes—*ladies*, it seems, initiate the seduction but *sisters* actually sleep with the *target*; both belong to the *sanctifying* or blackmailing team—while *family jewels* (via its slang use: male genitals) is CIA talk for an embarrassing secret that had best remain secret. *Slimwear*, a fashion term, is here a fetishist mag genteelism for rubber garments.

Sex is a sickeningly rich field, with homosexuality apparently a growth area. Assuming that homosexuals are still a minority, one gets the impression that there are almost as many terms for them as there are of them. Many of the entries under this general head are not fit to explicate in a respectable magazine, and we may hope that they are more honoured in the breach than the observance. (Not perhaps the happiest way of putting it.) *Dollar-an-inch-man* explains itself (*big Dick*, however, is a gambling expression for the point 10 in dice), as perhaps do *golden shower* and *three-way girl*—though the latter shouldn't be confused with *three-eye league*, a "hypothetical club" comprising politicians who have visited the homelands of the US's "major minorities", Israel, Ireland, and Italy. *Coffee-queen* is a homosexual prostitute who obliges for food or drink. And among pimps *blow* is "to lose a whore from your string of girls"—thank you for that "your"—while *bottom woman*, more respectable than she sounds, is the most reliable or efficient member of the string. *Alimony drone* is nice for a divorced woman who declines to remarry solely to continue milking her ex-husband. *Boylesk* seems somewhat contrived as burlesque/striptease featuring male performers, and should be distinguished from *butter-boy*, a young and ingenuous police constable in whose mouth the commodity would not melt.

The author seems to have a marked predilection for the Foreign Legion and its lingo, much of which comes from Arabic, like *bouzbir* (brothel) and *baraka* (luck)—though *ravio* (anything obtained illegally) could be a corruption of the French "*rabio*", something extra to a soldier's ration. *Coup-de-bambon*, defined as "a sudden physical or mental collapse with no apparent cause", may be a misprint for "*coup de bambou*": sunstroke, and hence, with "*avoir*", to go mad. *Abstauben*, we are told, is used by the Foreign Legion to denote anything acquired by irregular means; it would

[1] *Newspeak: A Dictionary of Jargon*. By Jonathon Green. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £5.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have been worth observing that in ordinary use this German word means "to wipe the dust off."

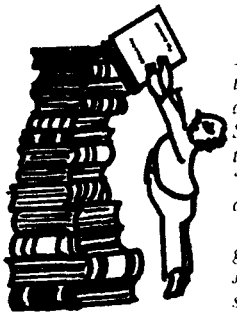
THE DEFINITIONS ARE sometimes less than adequate. *Acoustical excitation* is glossed merely as "(milit) sound"—a brass band, or bagpipes, or the Last Post? At other times Jonathon Green is not loath to betray his personal views, for instance on *affirmative action*, *caring professions*, and ("an insensitive flailing around of the subject's ego") *letting it all hang out*.

Some entries seem out of place—*Buchmanites*, *Wall Street*, *res cogitans* (from Descartes)—and others are recondite or recherché. In US education *ABD* stands for "All But Dissertation": the candidate has all the necessary credits for a Ph.D. but (is that all?) hasn't yet written the thesis. Even given sociology's well-known aversion to judgmental or even plain language, *affectional preference minorities* is a roundabout way of referring to homosexuals male or female. Probably *cabbage* (a tailor's perks, the bits of cloth left over) and *call a cab* (a jockey's action in waving a hand to keep his balance while taking a fence) are not too commonly heard. Likewise *eroduction*, cheap sex film or erotic production made for Japanese customers; and *unk-unks*, an aerospace locution for phenomena neatly defined as:

> "doubly unknown: in the first place they are not even known to exist, and if they were discovered, no one would have any idea what they were."

Good to know, though, that an *asymmetrical joking relationship* is one in which only one of the two partners may practise joking towards the other; that *bunny dip* describes how Hugh Hefner's staff serve food and drink backwards to prevent their breasts spilling out on to the customer's table; that activist groups fighting *ageism* (discrimination against the elderly) include the "Grey Panthers"; and that in the US *the fabulous invalid* is the Stage, the theatre, which still survives despite persistent rumours of its demise. All the same, *Sadler's Wells make-up*—plaster from the walls, as utilised by impoverished companies—might be considered timely.

Prize Pop Dreck



San Jose, California

A HORRIBLE PROSE CONTEST *that started as an academic publicity stunt three years ago now draws entries from around the globe. And now all Professor Scott Rice has to do is wade through all of the 3,000 manuscripts that strive to explore "new depths of literary dreck" and find the absolute worst.*

The tongue-in-cheek contest began as a gimmick to plug the writing program at San Jose State University, Rice said. The sort of stuff he's looking for:

"Awash with unfocused desire, Everett twisted the lobe of his one remaining ear and felt the presence of somebody else behind him which caused terror to pour through his nervous system like a flash flood pouring down the mid-fork of the Feather River before the completion of the Oroville Dam in 1959."

That entry came from a celebrated contemporary author—James D. Houston, of Santa Cruz, California—proving that even a professional can pen lousy prose if he really tries.

THE ANNUAL **"Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest" was started to free the writing spirit in genres ranging from Western to Science Fiction, and it now attracts competitors from around the globe. "It's a true outlet for people who look on helplessly at a world going to the dogs and are frustrated by their inability to contribute," Rice said.**

THE CONTEST WAS NAMED *for Edward George Earle Bulwer-Lytton, first Baron Lytton of Knebworth, a prolific 19th-century author. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says that although Bulwer-Lytton was a gifted storyteller, "his plots are elaborate and involved, his characterization is exaggerated and unreal, and his style is grandiose and ornate." His books, although dated, remain "immensely readable," it adds.*

This year's winner will be able to churn out immediately forgettable fiction on a new computer-word processor being given out as first prize.

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

MOST HEARTENING are the inventive coinages. Not exactly the linguistic pullulation on the drug scene, often tinged with rose: *angel dust, blue heaven, strawberry fields, white nurse, sweet Jesus*. . . . (Quite different is *God's medicine*, morphine used medically, its name attributed to Sir William Osler: "Yes, it is God's medicine, for if it were any better, it would be kept in heaven for the angels to use.") But rather those expressions which are not deceitfully euphemistic or obfuscatory, but legitimately eloquent. Thus, *demented* for a badly designed computer programme; *chew the scenery*, to overact; *pill palace*, hospital pharmacy; *black mist*, a literal translation of Japanese *kuro kiri*, for scandal and corruption within the government and attempts to mask them; *chop-socky*, Oriental martial-arts movies, conflating chop-suey and sock (i.e. to hit); *dawn raid*, forcing a take-over by surreptitiously buying as many shares as possible (up to 29%) as soon as the stock exchange opens; *feevee*, pay-cable-TV; *fruit salad*, display of ribbon medals; *working for Jesus*, putting in extra time without asking for extra pay; *citronella circuit* (US), small summer theatres in the sticks, alluding to the insect repellent needed thereabouts.

Brain candy is very light TV entertainment; but *caramel* belongs to a different category: it signifies light-weight reactor fuel which can be put only to peaceful purposes, and hence is not a euphemism. But *co-op mix*, alas, is—betokening home-made bombs in Northern Ireland, the materials for which are available in any supermarket. *Afghanistanism* used to be a pleasing idiom for the old device of diverting public attention away from awkward domestic problems to some safely remote place; but it has suffered the fate risked by all neologisms—as Green notes, the USSR ruined the metaphor when they invaded the country in 1979. *Corgi and Bess*, we learn, is the commercial TV nickname for what the BBC presumably calls the Queen's Christmas broadcast, while *Kitty Hawk* is the coded whisper that goes round Heathrow when Her Majesty is about to appear

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Green might have mentioned that Kitty Hawk is the village in North Carolina where the Wright Brothers made their first aeroplane flight) and *Kitty Rainbow* signals the Duke of Edinburgh. The *Queen's pipe* turns contraband tobacco into ash, and the *Queen's sewer* consumes contraband alcohol. Who complained that the Royal Family doesn't pull its weight?

Art, or what passes for it, is continually popping up here, under such heads as *minimal art, idiot art, know-nothing nihilism, drip painting, funk art, blow up* or *gonflable art, destructive art, art povera* ("*povera*" sounds better than "poor"), *l'art brut, expendable art, invisible painting* (easy on the eyes). . . . Not surprisingly, *beauty* and *truth* reside elsewhere, being properties of the bottom and the top quark respectively, quarks themselves constituting fundamental particles.

AS LANGUAGE AT ITS FINEST, literature must surely be free from such horrid jargon, or so we suppose. And indeed *stanza* in this context stands for (*1*) a segment of a TV series, and (2) a week at a given cinema. *Novelist* in Soviet penology is a prisoner who makes a confession, voluntary or otherwise. The *Trollope ploy* is a deliberate misinterpretation of some foreign situation whereby a country responds in the fashion most advantageous to it (the expression deriving from a scene in Trollope in which a lady chooses to construe a squeeze of the hand as a proposal of marriage). Even *verbiage* is confined to schools, where it denotes any written material: "no derogatory implication is involved."

Admittedly we come across *Künstlerroman* (minus its umlaut), and *knockoffs*, instant hack productions, often non-fiction and "tied into a major event, e.g. the Falklands War." But the rot sets in with *engagé* (lit. crit.); *prequal* (which should perhaps read *prequel*, it being a substitute for "sequel": the silly author has killed off his hero and is obliged to return to an earlier period in the character's life); and *concrete poetry* with its variants, among them *evident poetry, poetry of surface, semiotic poetry, machine poetry, popcrete* and *publit*.

THE SHEER AMOUNT of official tergiversation, the escalation of rigmarole and the rapid turnover, indicate the strain suffered by any government in a democracy—that is, in a society which, thanks to media too numerous or diverse to control, is aware or partially aware of what is going on and expects to have a say in it.

In this aspect and in more private fields *Newspeak* makes distressing reading, but is not totally unnerving. At least the world it evokes, however shady and squalid and shaky, is vigorous, ingenious, and for better or worse a fairly free one, a far cry from the bleak, bludgeoned world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The Electrician

I am baffled by the electrician.
I realised, looking up at the high
Ceiling, and the twisted mass
Of cables and girders where the rain
Had played contentedly with the
Light-fittings, that this was
A bit beyond me. So I hired him.
He is silent and stocky, and I see
That he is putting up a step-ladder.
I really must point out to him
That the ceiling is getting higher
All the time; already his no doubt
Helpful gesture is pointless. But
I am distracted. When I look back,
I see that he is poking about
Amid some exposed wiring. On closer
Inspection, he is placing there
What looks extraordinarily like
A firework. I now think he is under
A conviction that my wiring
Is too lethal to be cured. I just
Wish he would talk to me.

David Punter

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SOCIETY

A London Tragedy

Death of a Child

By Roy Kerridge

A CHILD IN TRUST

THE REPORT OF THE PANEL OF INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF **JASMINE BECKFORD**

PRESENTED TO BRENT BOROUGH COUNCIL AND TO BRENT HEALTH AUTHORITY BY THE MEMBERS OF THE PANEL OF INQUIRY

THE TRAGIC TALE of Jasmine, her mother Beverley, her step-father Maurice Beckford, and her half-sisters Louise and Chantelle is by now a familiar one in Britain. Maurice Beckford brutally killed four-year-old Jasmine, and he is now in prison.

In 1981 Beckford had been convicted and fined for an attack on two-month-old Louise. Jasmine's injuries at that time were attributed to falling downstairs, and no charge was brought on that count. Jasmine and Louise (Chantelle was not yet born) were then placed by the social services with an affectionate foster family, the Proberts. After seven months, just as they were settling down with their foster parents, who wished to adopt them, the same social workers removed the two children and returned them to their parents. This senseless act was referred to by the social workers, Ms Gun Wahlstrom and her senior, Mrs Diane Dietmann, as "rehabilitation."

On 5 July 1984, as they were knocking at the door of the Beckford home in an attempt to get the Council Care Order finally revoked, Jasmine was dying, if not already dead.[1]

A lengthy Enquiry then took place—appointed by Brent Borough Council, and dominated by the avuncular figure of the Chairman, Louis Blom-Cooper, Q.C.—and the Enquiry Report was issued, a fat paperback called *A Child in Trust*. I had already attended the Public Enquiry, so I knew the material on which the book was based. Clearly this was a book I should read myself, and if possible review.

At twenty past eight on a Tuesday morning, I took my place in the short queue for the book at Brent Town Hall. An hour later, a clerk staggered in with a big box fresh from the printers. Officials from the NSPCC and Dr Barnardo's bought copies in bulk. It was as well that I arrived early, as *A Child in Trust* sold out on the day of publication, an instant best-seller. It has not been reprinted.

At home, settling down with the book in an easy chair, I was soon reading the same familiar jargon about "bonding" that I had heard at the Enquiry. Social workers in Brent and elsewhere apparently believe that any child can be made to feel that it belongs to any adult simply by being placed with that adult under "expert supervision." This grafting of one unit to another is known as "the bonding process." Gun Wahlstrom, the "expert" in this case, was very keen on "monitoring the bonding" (as she put it). Whether love or affection can play any part in the "bonding process", the jargon of social workers does not admit. If so, the role of the social worker is indeed a god-like one, all human emotions at her fingertips.

Mr Blom-Cooper, with trusting naivety, accepted the behaviourist "theory of bonding" at its face value. (The Report was no doubt the work of many hands. However, it seemed to be imbued by the character of the genial Chairman.) To judge by the Report, he merely decided that bonding simply had not yet taken place when Jasmine had been left to the tender mercies of her mother and stepfather.

> "By definition, however, the child that has been abused has demonstrably not bonded with its abusing parents."

"Bonding" as a theory remains unexplored in the Report, Blom-Cooper having concluded that Jasmine's death was an example of nothing more than unsuccessful bonding. "Bonding with barbed wire" is a phrase he seemed fond of. Of course, Gun Wahlstrom's "monitoring" had not been very thorough—she had seen Jasmine only once in the ten months prior to the child's death. The tie of deep affection that had arisen between Jasmine and her foster parents, the Proberts, receives scant attention in this Report. Ms Wahlstrom did not approve of the Proberts, as their warm-hearted acceptance of Jasmine and Louise ran counter to Welfare Plans and, of course, could not qualify as "bonding."

Easily blinded by "science", Blom-Cooper seems typical of the legal profession (and indeed the police force) in his admiration for social workers and their marvellous "training." For it appears to be the "training" of social workers that has put them almost above the law in the estimation of many lawyers. If someone skilled in behaviourism could indeed successfully command lesser mortals to love or to hate, and to abruptly cease from loving and hating at a moment's notice, then social workers would certainly earn their place among the gods of Olympus or the hierarchy at Brent Town Hall.

Mr and Mrs Probert, who had been offered the hope of adopting the two girls, were shattered when the Welfare experts insensitively removed the children to a Children's Home preparatory to returning them to the Beckfords. Discovering where Beverley and Maurice Beckford lived, the devoted foster parents kept vigil outside the house on and off, for six months, hoping for a glimpse of the children. For this they were roundly abused in the Report (as they had been at the Enquiry):

> "We strongly deprecate their social behaviour. They were unhelpful in the process of providing foster care, in the

[1] At the time of her death this four-and-a-half-year-old child weighed 23 lbs. She had been "subjected to parental battering over a protracted period." The post-mortem description of her injuries covers five printed pages.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense of collaborating in the maintenance of the parental bond, and they hindered the orderly transition of the children back to their parents as soon as it became clear, at the latest after Christmas 1981, that the children were being prepared for a return home."

"Hindered the orderly transition"! Could not this be translated as "attempted in vain to rescue the children from their fate"? When a passer-by leaps forward and hinders the orderly transition of a car that is about to run over a child, that person is rightly acclaimed as a hero. Blom-Cooper appears to hold "professionals" in great regard. Someone from a humble background who rises all the way to a profession, he may believe, must be praiseworthy and good. Anyone from outside the professions who thwarts such a person in an unprofessional way must be blameworthy and bad. Social workers are curiously admired by many lawyers for their success in building up a profession from nothing. It appears that the key to professional status lies in college training (which the Proberts, as mere foster parents, lacked). At the Enquiry, the bewildered Proberts were criticised so severely for talking to the Press that, in the end, they shied away from anyone remotely connected with a newspaper.

Yet it was a newspaperman who first approached *them*, told them of Jasmine's death, and led them to her grave.

Perhaps the crime for which the Proberts were blamed was the heinous one of "giving the Welfare game away." Ms Wahlstrom's remark that in choosing the Proberts as foster parents she had been "really scraping the barrel" was virtually reiterated in the Report (p. 263).

SOMEONE ELSE who received harsh and unjust criticism in the Report was Councillor Phil Sealy. Were it not for this fiery West Indian councillor's demands for justice, the Enquiry would not have been held in public, and perhaps not held at all. At the preliminary hearing, Phil Sealy overrode the many shrill claims for a private hearing in a burst of justified rage. Thanks to him, the public have been allowed to see social workers in their true colours, with no "cover-up." But

> "Councillor Sealy was at best thoughtless . . . at worst he was pursuing a vendetta against social work staff. Irrationality triumphed over an attempt to impose rational argument. We deplore the bullying and hectoring style adopted by Councillor Sealy."

"My colleagues and I would have preferred the Enquiry to be in private", said Louis Blom-Cooper at Brent Town Hall on 8 June 1985, halfway through the proceedings. However, the last day of the Enquiry found him beaming at television cameras and assuring reporters and others that his bold decision to hold a public enquiry had been amply justified.

Amid all these festivities, one man sat brooding and alone—Councillor Sealy. I tried to cheer him up, and encouraged him to go and be interviewed along with everyone else.

"No, no, I only hope that some good comes out of it all", he murmured.

"Come on, Roy, aren't you going to interview me?" Blom-Cooper called out gaily.

I told him about a remark overheard in a launderette in Hackney, made by an exasperated mother to her offspring—"If you don't behave, I'll get the social workers on to you!"

"I know you want to abolish social workers!" he chortled.

"No, only Council ones!" I said. "The social workers attached to the Hospital and the Police in this case behaved impeccably. Local Councils should stick to street-cleaning and lamp-post lighting, and not try to control the lives of helpless children." We parted amicably.

THE VERY WORD *social* portends no good, and in any future Church, Hospital, or Police-run dispensation another name such as "almoner" or "child rescuer" might be used. NSPCC officers often mean well, and could be of great help in cases such as Jasmine's, but unfortunately the Society has "gone sociological" with "training" to such effect that officers now try to "rehabilitate children with parents" and "monitor the bonding." Do people really believe that a cruel parent is an impossibility? No one could *want* to hurt their child, some people believe, so that parents who *do* act cruelly only need to be shown the error of their ways.

Ms Wahlstrom and Mrs Dietmann were sacked shortly after the Report was published, but abolishing Council Social Workers, and the myriad of "experts" around them, is a task that would daunt the bravest politician. Yet, like Councils themselves, social workers have never "taken", but remain imperfectly grafted to the English oak, resented by the rest of the tree. What is the function of the social worker—"Friend of the Poor" or Council Spy? Given enormous and undefined powers and no plain function, many social workers apply themselves to Social Engineering, picking up and dropping personal "favourites", persecuting "middle-class reactionaries", and in general making a nuisance of themselves.

In 1968, as the Report points out, social workers with special skills (such as Child Care or experience with the blind or the old) were replaced by "Generic" Social Workers. These new, improved social workers were supposed to know everything about every problem, thanks to new instant "training." While specialised social workers were by no means angels, generic ones were far worse, with a wider range of public to annoy. Blom-Cooper's Report rightly deplored this change, and urged a return to the old days. His Report also recommended that social workers should be given an extra year's training (as if they were not insufferable enough already). "Trained" in a perfunctory smattering of sociology, social workers tend to be "somewhat acutely alive to the existence of class distinctions", as Jeeves once said to Bertie Wooster of Harold, the page boy at Twing.

MS WAHLSTROM AND her "superior officer" Mrs Dietmann (who actually appeared to have held Gun in awe, and been under her thumb) are taken to task (on p. 216 of the Report) for their friendly and friskily gullible approach to Maurice Beckford and Beverley.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> "It has been suggested to us that Mrs Dietmann and Ms Wahlstrom over-compensated for the fact that they were highly-educated, middle-class, white social workers coming into the home of under-educated, working-class Afro-Caribbean parents."

By "over-compensating", the writer evidently means "making allowances", as if a great gulf yawned between the two social workers and the Beckfords. Perhaps, in this view, the social workers felt that they had instinctive prejudices to overcome. However, most social workers under 45 years of age have been heavily influenced by the "Hippie Era" and its aftermath. Their driving passion, as with most modern "social engineers", is a sneering defiance of "the white middle class." A pleasant manner, together with a liking for pets, flowers and children, is to many social workers a sign of the dreaded class they are dedicated to harassing. Perhaps this dedication stems from the 1960s person's dislike of his or her own parents. Whatever the cause, it seems clear that Hippies and their heirs, "highly educated" or otherwise, share a common ground with rough semi-criminals, preferably West Indian drug-peddlers. In fact, the rise of such drug-peddlers owes a great deal to the influx to Notting Hill and Brixton of a new social-work-inclined "white middle class."

At large in her "Kensal Green Patch", Ms Wahlstrom seemed thrilled to befriend Maurice Beckford — a cannabis smoker. (As the Report makes clear, Gun Wahlstrom could see no wrong in Maurice Beckford, Jasmine's killer. Her prejudices seemed to be directed only against poor Mr and Mrs Probert.) In Appendix G of the Report, the Beckfords are classified as "Rastafarians" on the social workers' Review Form of the family. This was far from the case; yet reading between the lines of these memos on the Beckfords, there is a distinct trace of "Tee-hee, look at me, mixing with real Rastas, what would my parents think, isn't it great?" The mistaken Welfare belief that Rastafarianism is a "bona fide" religion (with drug-taking as a legitimate sacred ritual) leads to many absurdities. If they had gone by the book, then the Probert foster parents would have been obliged to bring up Jasmine and Louise in a "creed" whose doctrine seems to be mainly a matter of hair-styles and pop-music preferences.

Incidentally, the curious word "Afro-Caribbean", which appears to mean "Negro", has come into being because the latter word is now thought of in Welfare circles as "racist." "West Indian" can no longer be used on official forms as a guide to race and skin-colour, because so many born-in-England children of West Indians prefer to believe that they are English. Instead, they have had to become citizens of Afro-Caribbea. The word has no precise meaning: it cannot quite mean "Negro", as some Negroes are Africans with no trace of the Caribbean in their background. It is chiefly used to encompass both West Indian Negroes and their English children, in an apparent attempt to prevent people of colour living in Britain from ever daring to feel that they are English men or women.

A Civilized Location for Study Leave in England

Ilford Bridges Farm, Somerset, England, is midway between north and south coasts, quite near to Taunton.
The Farm is a 16th cent. thatched house. Its large sitting-rooms provide study space and relaxation by open firesides. There is central heating. In one room there is a Bechstein Grand with a reasonable collection of classical pianoforte music. There is a library, useful for writing or reference; this is separated from the house by some twenty yards. The subjects covered are extremely various, with most emphasis on literature, art and architecture.
There are spacious bedrooms, double or single, giving plenty of private study space. There is a separate visitors' bathroom.
Ilford Bridges provides good cooking, fresh milk and free-range eggs, also organically grown vegetables. Vegetarian diet's no problem.
For further details and information please contact the
Directors, Ilford Bridges Farm, close Stocklinch,
Ilminster, Somerset, England.

HERE AND THERE in the Report, the likeable, childish side of the character of Louis Blom-Cooper, Q.C., emerges, full of well-meaning sincerity. What are we to make of his suggestion (on p. 250) that children of a suitable age should be allowed to take part in Social Work Case Conferences that concern their own future? One *foster parent* I know, invited to a case conference, was forced to sit outside until a decision had been reached. The social-work temperament has made case conferences, or gossip sessions over coffee, a very different thing from that which was originally intended. Amid excruciating jargon, titters of "*these people!*" and the tinkle of teacups, odd phrases such as "tied to the leg of a bed" occasionally surface, in an atmosphere of scandalised glee. Possibly the presence of children could be useful as an inhibiting factor. With touching naivety, Blom-Cooper can look at social workers and see angels where others notice only pitchforks and a slight smell of brimstone. Of course, those who know social workers outside their work, as friends and equals, can have little realisation of how those same workers appear to their "clients."

CHAPTER THIRTY OF THE REPORT ends with a firm Conclusion, printed in extra-black ink. This same Conclusion appears again as a recommendation in the summing-up at the close. It is this:

> "We recommend that a greater effort be made to recruit black families as prospective foster parents in order to provide the greatest measure of choice to local authorities seeking to place for fostering and adoption black children in their care."

Evidence at the Enquiry suggested that Gun and Diane Dietmann (a Swede and an American, a couple of 1960s survivors if ever I saw one) were eager to "toe the Party Line" on matching children to foster parents by colour. This they achieved by "fostering" the Beckford girls with their own family. This could also be called "rehabilitation." At the Enquiry, the social workers declared that in "rehabilitating" the children, they had merely been obeying the recommendation made by the magistrate at Maurice Beckford's first trial. Much was made of this revelation at the Enquiry. It then turned out (to Blom-Cooper's perplexity) that the magistrate had in turn been acting on a recommendation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from Ms Wahlstrom, so that matters had moved full circle.

"We do not think that Ms Wahlstrom did more than indicate to the Magistrate that rehabilitation was still only an option", the Report states sadly (p. 290). It was at this point in the Enquiry that a few scales fell from Blom-Cooper's eyes as he looked at Gun.

Ideas of "Black Separatism", born of a "Black Power" ideology with nowhere to go, have led social workers to place the concept of "race" as a first requirement when fostering-out children. West Indians and their English descendants tend to avoid getting mixed up with Authority like the plague (on the ancient principle of never troubling trouble till trouble troubles you). Few come forward as foster parents. Those who do are often drawn by the extra financial rewards as advertised in the "Black Press." The stress on "Blackness" and "Black Culture" in council pleas for foster parents probably attracts militant and defiant types, rather than kind-hearted couples who would like to care for a child of any colour at all.

There is no more a "Black Community" than there is a White Community, and West Indian neighbours of the Beckfords knew very little of what was going on in their house. I have often observed that brutal, violent West Indian men are never referred to, or even apparently noticed, by the normal West Indians around them. Timidity and the wish to gloss over something that cannot be explained, on the part of the majority, may be the reason. When such a man is arrested, neighbouring West Indians often seem surprised and inclined to blame it on "police brutality." "Avoiding authority", and never reporting anyone, is a point of view that has its drawbacks.

The Report suggests (p. 270) that the title *foster parent* might be changed to *foster care worker*. The word "parent" suggests a feeling between adult and child that might well grow stronger than the impersonal "non-emotionally involved" attitude that social workers are trained to respect. If something isn't done (some social workers feel), then the tie between foster parent and child might grow stronger—stronger even than the natural obedience and deference owed by the "untrained" to the social services! The Proberts (the Report indicates) ought to have seen themselves as "care workers", not as parents.

THE VOICE OF Blom-Cooper at his kindliest and most sincere can be heard at the close of the Report, when the whole horrific Jasmine story is retold and commented on. Every broken bone and injury is listed with grisly detail in the Appendix; and there are X-ray photographs of the dead child. A recent social worker's report on Jasmine's sisters appears in the Appendix. Louise is now apparently showing signs of disturbed behaviour, and the writer comments: "It is difficult to gauge at this point how successfully Louise will be able to overcome the trauma of her early years. . . ."

Quite. When first rescued from Maurice Beckford and placed with the Proberts, Louise had been a tiny baby, her mind (if not her body) more or less unscarred because undeveloped. Her character may now be destroyed after the horrifying experience of being returned to a cruel home and then removed once more. Both she and Chantelle are now apparently in the "warmth" of a new foster home. Nobody except the new foster parents themselves—and the social workers—knows where the two girls are. It seems that not even the Prime Minister has the power to find out, let alone the Proberts who love Louise and ought now to be taking care of her. Argentina is not the only country to have "disappeared ones." A police state might be preferable to such a Welfare State.

One of the last items in the Appendix of *A Child in Trust* is a statement from Dr Iain West of St Thomas's Hospital.

> "At eleven a.m. on Friday 6th July, 1984, at Westminster Public Mortuary, Horseferry Road, London SW1, Det. Insp. Dickens showed me the body of Jasmine Christina Beckford, aged four years."

La Vie et l'Art

Pluck and hold a nodding rose:
fresh scarlet, dewed—

then trap a mote of morning light:
one faint bright point—

then capture one frail fallen leaf:
pale umber, cracked—

blend these soft colours on the page:
a cyanide-
choked butterfly—

Batori K. Ngabwe

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RELIGION

Theologians in the Political Mêlée

On "Relevant" Churchmen—By JULIUS GOULD

THE ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury, in 1983, set up a Commission of 18 members—clerics, social scientists, and others—under the chairmanship of Sir Richard O'Brien "to examine the strength, insights, problems and needs of the Church's life and mission in the Urban Priority Areas . . . and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies."

Faith in the City (*FIC*) is that Commission's Report.[1] The Urban Priority Areas ("acronymed" in the Report to UPAs) are Britain's miserable inner cities—places where the working classes have never responded en masse to the Church's message or ministry. There can be no doubt that these UPAs —parts of London and cities such as Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester—contain sizeable pockets of human misery, unemployment, degradation, and squalor. Nor is life often much more agreeable in the peripheral zones into which, in the 1960s and after, urban "slum-dwellers" were decanted.

The dreariness is nothing new. As I can recall from my own childhood, such places were never idyllic, rustic haunts of civility. . . . But their present plight is especially bleak. The population mix has changed. Isolated old people, young people on the move, and one-parent families have produced a new social pattern. A plethora of social services (never by definition, "adequate") seeks to meet the needs and demands of those without support from family or kin. These UPAs, like many other urban areas, face the consequences of some especially acute forms of social change—what the Report delicately describes at the outset as "the arrival in our cities of large numbers of adherents to other faiths." Central to the desolation of the UPAs is the decline of the older manufacturing industries made uncompetitive through poor productivity—the result of a mix of inept management plus overmanning and a steady touch of industrial subversion, marked by disused factories and dismal municipal tower-blocks.

The spectacle of my native Liverpool, for example, arouses deep pity and anger. Its denizens, whatever their colour or date of arrival, are the victims of earlier policies—of errors by central and local government, property developers, trade-union bosses, and soft employers. Anger and pity are joined by fear: the more vulnerable inhabitants of UPAs stand in daily fear for their persons and property. On occasion, as in 1981 and 1985, the urban powder-keg horribly explodes. Idle and restless youth seeks excitement and revenge against "society": they resent the police over real or alleged harassment. And always in the background there is the inflammatory rhetoric and practice of ambitious or militant local politicians.

When *Faith in the City* appeared last autumn, it was seen as an obvious attack on the British Government's economic and social policies. It was also the latest instalment in a long list of battles between Church spokesmen and the Government on such matters as nuclear disarmament, overseas aid, the commemoration of the Falklands victory, and—not least—the violent picketing during the miners' strike of 1984-85. Leading Churchmen (and even more the activist rank-and-file) include an ample quota of *bien-pensants*. Their intellectual mainstay in the *Guardian* newspaper. They are ever vigilant against John Bullishness abroad and any sign of "élitism", "consumerism" or "individualism" at home. For some years the Church of England (with its new synodical structure) has become a focus for these moral discontents—and for the broad anti-Thatcher political conclusions that follow. A key figure in this Church activity is the Bishop of Liverpool, who was a member of the Archbishop's Commission: his book *Bias to the Poor* (1983) has attracted much attention.[2]

Many astute and informed observers, such as the Reverend Professor David Martin of the London School of Economics, had come to note how the Church's more vocal figures had espoused "the politics of a private association." The Church had seen a shift "from an emphasis on the individual in his

[1] *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation.* Report of the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S COMMISSION on Urban Priority Areas. Church House Publishing (Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1), £7.50. *The Popular Version of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Report.* Christian Action (308 Kennington Lane, London SE11), £1.00.

[2] Not always favourable: see, for example, the collection of essays edited by Digby Anderson, *The Kindness That Kills: The Churches' Simplistic Response to Complex Social Issues* (SPCK, 1984).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

particular situation to an analysis in terms of social structural defects." The traditional concern with individual conscience had been "overlaid by the collection and advancement of opinions about what somebody else ought to be doing or have done." Thus, clerical officials and committees produce a whole raft of opinions on international as well as domestic concerns. The Church becomes yet another liberal pressure group whose opinions are—in Professor Martin's words—"vaguely certified as of Christian provenance."[3] Put more bluntly, there floats around such opinions the odour of a bureaucratic sanctimony intended to have political effects.

SUCH "OPINIONS" were bound to turn towards Britain's urban deprivation and to the central—and difficult—problem of Unemployment. For both religious and secular *bien-pensants* (living in what they uneasily call "comfortable Britain") the decay of the inner cities almost confirms the goodness of their thoughts, as well as the ever-to-be-deplored shortage of Governmental compassion. For the self-evident response to that decay is compassionate spending by Government (preferably, though for Churchmen to say so would be indiscreet, by *another* Government) as well, of course, as action by, and within, the Church itself. Part II of *Faith in the City* does confront the challenge to the Church, leading up to 38 recommendations on how it might better deploy its pastoral manpower, churchly money and theological organisation. This part of the work displays much proper benevolence and even more zeal for the practical. It also reviews the proliferating Church bodies and procedures which—generally abbreviated into acronyms—are seen as channels for such action.

> "The development of Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry (LNSM) in UPAs can be seen as a symbol of the official Church's support for promotion of local, outward-looking and participating churches."
>
> "We therefore recommend that the above proposals relating to the selection, training and funding of LNSMs be tested in dioceses selected in consultation with ACCM [Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry] and the Archbishop's Officer for the UPAs; that the LNSM programme be monitored over a ten-year period, under the national coordination of ACCM, with additional funds made available by the national Church; and a report be published by ACCM for the General Synod."

Such bureaucratic thoughts readily lend themselves to satire. But I do not quote them in any mocking spirit; on the contrary, I find them strangely soothing. They should be welcomed. For they embrace matters about which the Church can be authoritative—its own structure, its own abbreviations and aspirations about what it can do with its wherewithal. And the authors of the Report are sensitive to the way their administrative ideas (on "Organising the Church" and "Supporting a Participating Church") have been underreported.

I wish I could be as welcoming to the other main parts of *Faith in the City*—to its account in Part I of its "theological priorities" and to its near-200-page exposition (in Part III) on the "Challenge to the Nation."

The theological passages, to be blunt, I find remarkably meagre: but their very slender upshot makes them a cultural document that warrants attention. So I shall return to it. The "Challenge to the Nation" covers all the standard topics of urban policy—e.g. Unemployment, Health, Welfare, and Housing. That is the part of *FIC* that was meant for the headlines. It is clearly the work of many busy hands; but the message is unambiguous. As a necessary if not sufficient condition for urban renewal, the Nation (that is, the taxpayers via the Government) should spend far more on Public Projects. This view is hardly original. It has been the central position of all those floor-walkers in the corridors of power, the universities and elsewhere who, from day one in 1979, have been determined to block the Thatcher innovations. The biggest Thatcherite mistake was to underestimate the bitterness nursed by the guardians (often self-appointed) of the "ousted" post-War consensus.

I TURN FIRST to the chapter on "theological" priorities. It painfully reflects the identity-crisis of modern Anglicanism. Its voice is unmistakable—that of a minority of "established" persons seeking to be modern, relevant, and popular. It is an Establishment that is nervous about privilege and academicism. Desperately concerned to reform social ills, it seeks to weld that concern into an inchoate but, to be sure, thoroughly modern universe of discourse. Many of the Report's early critics took sharp ideological exception to what they saw as its "Marxism."[4] They either ignored or took for granted its broader modernism—one that generates (as we shall see) a mélange of allusions to prevailing philosophy and current social science. Of course the chapter opens with the Pauline maxim that Christians should "remember the poor." But it swiftly glides on to the more recent notion of "relative poverty"—as if that idea (as contrasted with "absolute" poverty levels) is beyond dispute: which it is not. Then comes the core question: whether "remembering the poor"

> "should be confined to personal charity or whether it can legitimately take the form of social and political actions aimed at altering the circumstances which appear to create poverty and distress. . . ."

The answer could be readily anticipated.

> "We shall argue that these are false alternatives: a Christian can be committed to a form of action that embraces both."

---

[3] See David Martin, "The Church of England: From Established Church to Secular Lobby", in *The Kindness That Kills*.

[4] What is said about Marx is, in fact, extremely sparse. Reference is made (p. 51) to "Marx's perception that evil is to be found, not just in the human heart but in the very structures of economic and social relationships." There follows another reference to Marx's views about the rich getting richer, which "Marx may have derived" from the Old Testament. The full range of Marx's aspirations and sources is left severely alone. A bit of the Bible and a touch of class suffices.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still, the *FIC* musings on political theology go beyond this expected conclusion. They also include the passages that gave rise to the cry of "Marxism"—and to the anguished counter-cry (from Catholic as well as Anglican Bishops) that the Report was being "rubbished' by the Conservative Party, the insensitive media, and so on.

In a strict sense the mock-indignation over the charge of "Marxism" can be sustained. The more obvious intellectual inspiration of *FIC* is a quite unoriginal economic and sociological mishmash, plus an unrepentant "Butskellism." But there is certainly another strand that does pay homage to fashionable neo-Marxist ideas. We hear that "Liberation Theology" (always, unlike just plain normal theology, given the reverent benefit of capital letters) in Latin America

> "has proposed a method and set of priorities which reflect the concerns, not of the oppressors but of the oppressed, not of the rich but of the poor. In this context theological reasoning has seemed relevant, and in a certain sense, 'true', only if it results in a determination and a strategy to liberate the poor from this oppression."

We are advised that "conditions in Western Europe are not such that this kind of political 'liberation' could ever be a comparable theological priority." The many Marxoid Anglicans who take the opposite view may well have been downcast by this news. But *FIC* does throw them a few meaty bones. In its chronic unease about "traditional" theology, it quickly announces that:

> "To all of us the example of Liberation Theology opens up the possibility that new priorities, as well as new methods, can restore to us a theology that is truly relevant to the needs and aspirations of people today."

FIC also notes that the Latin American "base communities" (or "churches of the poor") might, *mutatis mutandis*, find their analogue in Britain's inner cities—as places where, presumably, theology can be "done by the people" rather than simply discussed within rarefied and academic circles.

All this "relevance" lies in the future. For the present, while many Churchmen find it "more congenial to express their discipleship by helping individual victims of misfortune and oppression, fewer are willing to rectify injustices in the structure of society." What is more: "We have little tradition of initiating conflict and coping with it creatively." These enterprises, it is agreed, entail "ambiguities" with which Anglicans are said to have "wrestled": "most of us feel a lack of confidence in these grey areas." Is it not conceivable that there might be grounds for such lack of confidence? That less may be known than some imagine about the "circumstances which appear to create poverty and distress"? Indeed, to get the "causes" wrong may be to create *more* poverty or distress—and so make matters *worse*. (That is why, to give one notorious example, so many municipal tower-blocks proved such an unsatisfactory form of housing for the poor that they have had to be dynamited.) Some humility, therefore, which would go quite beyond "a lack of confidence", may be both becoming and warranted—not least from those who tend to despise rival views as "dogmatic". . . . There are spirits who find much virtue in wrestling with ambiguities inside a grey area. It can even be most spiritually agreeable to devise modes of "rectifying injustices" and "initiating conflict." But such "rectification" and "initiation" make considerable demands on human wisdom and competence. And there is, after all, a body of critical social thought (which the Report seems totally to ignore) that argues that this kind of simple utopian objective is a mirage and that its zealous pursuit can lead to tyranny—and thus to greater injustices and deeper conflicts than ever before.

If the sociology is flat, the theology is high-spirited. It is all in an assertively modernist vein. Its centre-piece is a compressed piece of intellectual history (p. 50 ff) which contains no dates. Its gist is that it is only since Descartes and/or the Enlightenment that

> "it became possible, and eventually popular, to think of religion as essentially a matter of the relationship between an individual and God without regard to the society in which that individual is set . . . it is only in this relatively brief period that the question could have arisen of a gospel which was not concerned for society as much as for the individual."

Such an "individualistic" approach, we are told, "may already be obsolete."

The full flavour of what follows can only come from some extended quotation.

> "Philosophy has moved far beyond Descartes and has finally exorcised 'the ghost in the machine' few philosophers now allow for a separate component, or 'soul', with which religion can be uniquely concerned, and modern philosophy encourages us to return to the idiom of the Bible, according to which God addresses our whole person along with the social relationships amid which we live. Modern social sciences insist that no analysis of the human person is adequate that does not take into account the influence upon that person of language, culture and social conditions. Christians claim to be entrusted with a divinely revealed understanding of human nature: but they have no excuse for continuing to express this in terms of a once fashionable Cartesian analysis whilst most philosophers and psychologists have moved on. The suggestion that religion is entirely a personal matter of the relationship of an individual with God should now be as unacceptable as the belief that knowledge is an entirely personal matter of the relationship of an individual with the environment."

There then follows a review of several social situations (such as the experience of hospital chaplains and missionaries as well as testimony from UPAs) which show

> "the impossibility of identifying a 'soul' independent of material circumstances . . . everything tells against the notion that there is a 'soul', quite independent of social

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and economic conditions, to which an entirely personal gospel may be addressed. . . ."

THROUGH THESE short but remarkable sections several points emerge.

First of all there is the recurrent (though paradoxical) priority given to the "individual" as related to the Almighty.

Secondly, there is the obvious coolness about the idea of a "soul." This reserve draws on the work of philosophers and psychologists—and on points upon which "modern social sciences . . . insist." We are not given the names of these sages or writers. But as a social scientist I was amused to compare the regard for what the "modern social sciences" *insist* upon with the rather weaker talk of the Christian *claim* to revelation. Mere claims are always less urgent than insistences. Poor old-fashioned Cartesians are peremptorily advised that they have "no excuse" for their thoughts, and seem likely to become a stigmatised, disadvantaged minority.

Thirdly, there seems a degree of muddle on the "nature of knowledge"—admittedly a field no easier for Bishops and their advisers to master than European intellectual history. For example, in the passage which I have quoted, it is not self-evident who is being rebuked for holding "the belief that knowledge is an entirely personal matter of the relationship of an individual with the environment." The word *entirely* begs most of the question. And round the argument there buzzes the old "sociology of knowledge", stressing the social factors framing what we know.

Those unmoved by this buzz might ask questions like these: What is *the* environment to which "knowers" are supposed to relate? Are there not, rather, many—even countless—environments towards which the knower might relate in a variety of interesting and complex ways? (The "environment" to which mathematical logic, for example, relates is quite different from that facing classical theology or the modern social sciences.) Such questions cannot be evaded, let alone answered, by easy reference to "social factors." How curious that Churchmen should be so eager to offer bald assertions about "modern social sciences" and to downgrade "old-fashioned" and "unacceptable" Christian tenets. It is not for me to advise Christians on what they should "accept." But readers of all religions, and of none, can take little pleasure when Christians engage themselves in such shallow analysis. All the allusive modernity seems more disagreeable than the shuffling courtesies extended to Liberation Theology and to its politics of collective obligation.

The central worry—and not only for Church Commissioners—is unemployment. At one point *FIC* observes: "We must make it perfectly clear that we believe there is no instant, dogmatic or potent solution to the problem of unemployment." Who could dissent from such clerical and worldly wisdom? Had there been such a solution, one Government or another, over the last decade, would have leaped for it. Such open-mindedness, alas, is intermittent. Before long (indeed on the same page) we face the stern admonition, boldly italicised lest it escape notice:

> *"We believe at present too much emphasis is being given to individualism and not enough to collective obligation."*

This leads to yet another round of urgent recommendations "to the nation" which amount to vastly increased public spending on capital and current account. Expert secular, even scholarly, arguments can be found for this recipe in the diverse writings of all the economists enrolled in the active service of various parties on the liberal Left. *FIC* does not seriously trespass into such territory: it rather takes for granted their general drift—what they share in common—on the virtues of public spending.[5]

THAT THERE ARE less sanguine views is conceded. In fact towards wealth creation a tone of restrained enthusiasm is maintained. It may not actually be "rubbished" but its advocates may feel praised with faint damns:

> "It is often said, for example, that the first priority of our economic system is 'the creation of wealth'. There are, of course, good grounds for this. . . . But there are important provisos. The creation of wealth must always go hand in hand with just distribution. . . . If these provisos are not insisted upon, the creation of wealth cannot be allowed to go unchallenged as a first priority for national policy. . . ."
>
> ". . . it would be foolish to suggest that the only way forward would be for Britain as a nation to get poorer. . . . To affirm the importance of wealth creation —as we do—is not enough. Economic policy should be as concerned with the distribution of income and wealth as with its creation."

Whence comes all the self-assurance that gives the theme of "just distribution" such pride of place? It is a priority that does not, in fact, go unchallenged among Christians, many of whom would support the views of the economist Graham Dawson: ". . . to think that wealth is simply acquired, by grabbing for oneself what is waiting ready-made to be shared out amongst us all, displays gross ignorance. . . ."[6]

The arguments proliferate. Interestingly, the Chief Rabbi of Britain's Jews has entered into this theologico-politico arena by publishing in a booklet entitled *From Doom To Hope* his comments on *FIC*. This took him into dangerous ecumenical territory. For he felt bound to discuss the differences and similarities between earlier Jewish experiences in British cities and today's ethnic ghettos. His main thrust was into the broader topics of wealth creation and the work ethic. Christianity and Judaism both "raise the relief of want as a precept of the highest religous virtue." But the Chief Rabbi writes that:

> ". . . the Report . . . whilst it distinguishes between work

[5] Either through intention or superstition the dreaded name of Mrs Thatcher seems nowhere to appear. But the implication is clear: e.g. "Our time has witnessed a more or less crude exaltation of the alleged benign social consequences of individual self-interest and competition."

[6] See *The Kindness That Kills*, p. 13-20.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and unemployment . . . falls short of hailing work as a virtue in itself . . . the Jewish work-ethic is rather more positive and demanding. . . . Cheap labour is more dignified than a free dole, and industriousness generates greater wealth than increased wages for decreasing hours of work."

Here is one theologian who *insists* on being old-fashioned, with the *claim* that

"while Judaism obviously insists on unimpeachable rectitude in the acquisition of wealth and on the due allocation of a given percentage for charitable purposes . . . it never frowned on gaining wealth as such, nor demanded that wealth be shared or distributed to equalise rich and poor by some artificial balance, unrelated to effort and skill. . . ."

Inevitably the Chief Rabbi's reflections left anti-individualists in his flock unhappy: they rushed to upbraid him for being "tendentious", "patronising" and "complacent."[7]

I FIND MUCH IN THE REPORT very hard to accept, but any document as lengthy as *Faith in the City* has some useful ideas. Many of its suggestions—about work and crime, for example—seem practicable if taken on their own. But they tend to be surrounded by overstatements or fashionable trendy absurdity. These difficulties often flow from the Report's comprehensive ambitions. There are proposals to adopt

"(*i*) . . . people-oriented policies which promote justice by mitigating inequalities wherever they are found; and

[7] The Chief Rabbi's views were not unsupported. See, for example, the much discussed pamphlet by Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, *Wealth and Poverty: A Jewish Analysis*, published in the Social Affairs Unit series on "Taking Thought for the Poor."

Lollobrigida & "Terrorists as Heroes"

"TIMES HAVE CHANGED", the editors of "Der Spiegel" told Gina Lollobrigida; and if the "Spiegel" says it, then (as they say in Germany) it must be true.

Time was when West Berlin was considered "the Easternmost outpost of freedom", full of Cold War stalwarts resisting the Stalinist system on all sides. Three decades later the *Zeitgeist* seems to have radically changed. Demonstrations (and even riots) greet US generals and Washington Cabinet Ministers when they come to try and shore up the old Western anti-Communist cause. Young Germans flock to Berlin not, as in the old days, to help establish democratic institutions —a Free University, a refugee camp—but to avoid the Bonn army draft. Clearly there has been a serious disorientation of the public spirit.

And now a film about the famous Baader-Meinhof terrorists has been made which is praised as being "fair . . . objective . . . neutral"—and it was awarded the first prize in the Berlin Film Festival. Is this yet another sign of the times?

In another version of the ideological doctrine of "moral equivalence", we are now supposed to condemn judges in the Stammheim trial for infractions of judicial procedure in the same spirit as terrorists who "executed" judges, policemen, district attorneys, and a few recalcitrant dissidents in their own ranks. Middle-class justice which misses out on a writ of habeas corpus is as bad as revolutionary terrorism which arranged for the corpses in the first place.

Is this the new way to rehabilitate the Baader-Meinhof gang? Or merely a new way to cultivate a nihilistic indifference to "bourgeois institutions" trying hectically to cope with the threat of violence and political murder in society's midst?

The reporters of "Der Spiegel", whose interview we reprint here, thought they had an easy target with the Berlin Film Festival chairlady—Gina Lollobrigida. They were as rude and provocative as they could be, but, surprisingly enough, she gave as good as she got.

M.J.L.

YOU WERE the "chairperson" of the jury, but you practically disowned the jury decision to give the "Stammheim" film the first prize in the recent Berlin Film Festival.

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **An absolutely absurd decision!**

—Why?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **The whole purpose of a film festival is to give world-wide publicity to film as an art form. It isn't supposed to be a battlefield on which groups fight for their own personal political or commercial interests.**

—Are you also rejecting the claim that the film about the German terrorists by Reinhard Hauff and Stefan Aust has value as a political documentation?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **"Stammheim" is nothing but words recorded by camera. And they come rattling out like bullets out of a machine-gun. "Stammheim" is nothing but a pictorial carpet laid under the official record of a courtroom trial, something which should be read but not filmed. I understand the art of the cinema to be something quite different.**

—What?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **A prize-winning film must communicate an artistic quality, either in its direction, photography, or the action. No such qualities can be found in "Stammheim."**

—But surely the film does communicate something, and could it be that the film is too political for you?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **It is a film which can be misunderstood. One can take it to be saying that the trial judges are all failures and that the terrorists are the heroes.**

—But the Stammheim Trial was actually not really one of the illustrious chapters in the record of West German justice.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(*ii*) place-oriented . . . approaches which concentrate resources to a degree which makes a visible and sustained impact, and so offer new hope."

Now the second proposal is in principle sensible and open to application. The first is pure and risible dogma. It is typical of the Report's tactics and rhetoric that it jumbles the two. A brief chapter on health contains massive, chic overstatements:

> "Underlying the problem of disease is the more fundamental problem of unease which has its roots in factors such as anxiety, low personal esteem, broken relationships, and the stress of poverty, deprivation, unemployment and bad housing. . . ."

There is only a small grain of truth in this broad assertion. Those "modern social scientists" invoked to support this theology would sensibly avoid large concepts such as "the problems of disease and unease", and would look instead at specific illnesses. All illnesses are unwelcome; some are terrifying; but they are just not all rooted in, or based upon, "anxiety, broken relationships", etc. They may *create* some of these undesirable outcomes—which, though bad enough, is quite a different matter.

There are, unsurprisingly, some very touching concessions to advanced thought—to various forms of Affirmative Action programmes—some of which, in limited forms, may make sense. There is approval for the Inner London Education Authority's programme against sex-stereotyping and its policy on "the elimination of sexism in schools." We hear nothing of the ludicrous and undesirable aspects of these policies when (like "anti-racism") they are carried to politicised Leftist extremes. Ideological enthusiasts for these simple formulas vastly overrate the support for their ideas among ordinary parents of both sexes and all colours.

I am sure the authors of *Faith in the City* may feel that attention to selected detail obscures the main burden of their case. These are Churchmen with large views, not least about

---

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **The film is banal, empty, uninspired reportage.**

—Would your attitude be so severe if it were a matter of an Italian film, and its content were emotionally closer and more relevant?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **What's the difference, German or Italian—a film has no frontiers.**

—Eight years after the murder of Aldo Moro the attempt is being made in Rome to bring to the screen the most tragic chapter of Italian terrorism. Would this in your opinion also be unartistic reportage?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **One has to wait and see what comes out of the filming. And then, too, there is a difference between the story of the assassination of the President of the Italian Republic, a helpless figure in the hands of the kidnappers, and the story of terrorists who have blood on their hands and who are made to seem to be heroes.**

—In the Venice Film Festival of 1981, Margaretha von Trotta's film "Die bleierne Zeit" was awarded the Golden Lion prize. The film is the story of the Ensslin sisters, one of whom was an active terrorist and the other a "legal" militant with generally Left sympathies, and it is recognised to be (even in Italy) a document of cinema art.

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **I haven't seen the film, and can't judge whether it has prize-winning qualities.**

—But even films like Costa-Gavras's "Z" about the resistance to the Greek military dictatorship, or the prize-winning film of Francesco Rosi about the Mafia, have won recognition as being artistically valuable.

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **And why don't you add to these the masterful "Gandhi" film? "Stammheim" can't be compared in any way to any of these, for its whole inspiration seems to me to be cheap, sinister, and dangerous. Too bad for the Berlin Film Festival. It was a political decision to give the prize to this film.**

—Are you trying to say the jury in Berlin was being manipulated?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **The vote for "Stammheim" was prefabricated. It was already clear to me before the Festival began that this entry would get the first prize.**

—Can you prove that?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **The political pressure was felt by us all, and this was confirmed to me by many of the persons on the jury. Anyway the jury member who fought most for the "Stammheim" film actually slept through the whole showing of the film, and doesn't that suggest that the decision was already arranged?**

—Then why didn't you, who were presiding over the jury, resign in protest?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **I did want to resign, but I allowed myself to be talked out of it. A little more publicity would have given the film an even bigger box-office. I wasn't happy about staying on, and I really suffered because I couldn't bring the majority around to my point of view, which was, simply put, that a prize-winning film should be of some artistic interest.**

—You were in the 1950s and '60s a world-famous movie star . . . "Lollo" . . . working with great film directors. But that was all a long time ago. Times have changed. Maybe your dissatisfaction with the Berlin vote stems from the fact that you still think of cinema as pure entertainment?

LOLLOBRIGIDA: **Poets of the cinema like Vittorio De Sica don't come often, unfortunately. But there are great living film directors like Ingmar Bergman, Steven Spielberg, and others. Nor have the changing times just passed me by; I change and mature too. . . . But as an actress, an artist if you will, I am not interested in politics. And for that reason I very much regret that we wasted so much valuable time trying to decide about "Stammheim", for or against. The result was that we had almost no time left to think about the many interesting films that were entered by younger persons who were indeed artists.**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

largesse. Their principal call appears to be for increased spending by "the nation." In the 23 recommendations to "government and nation" (i.e. taxpayers, rich and poor) I counted eleven rhetorical calls for "increased', "expanded" or "extended" provision of public funds. I did not register eleven careful assessments of priorities and costings. No redistribution at current levels of Britain's national income could yield the money for an immediate start on all the Housing, Health, and Welfare improvements on the utopian scale envisaged—as well as pulling back the massive unemployment. So the recipe in the end must be one for increased taxation and borrowing.

In a way, it all comes down to making a frontal assault on Mrs Thatcher's policies, which seek slowly to reduce the share of public spending in the national income. (That the share cannot be *drastically* reduced is a tribute to the survival power of the Welfarist consensus, even after seven years of "Thatcherism.") Obviously the Church Commission was looking beyond the Government's shoulder. They anticipated that some two years before a General Election their broadside would feed into some imminent anti-individualistic, neo-collectivist revival.

The Church, far from being "the Tory Party at prayer", now has political theologians busy at the opposition hustings.

Bicycle Races, Roundhay Park, Leeds

From far above the amphitheatre's green,
Shrunken by distance, each rider and machine
Are fused into a single thing, alive,
Insectile. Arched backs and beetle heads contrive,
With spindle limbs, to move on shimmering rings
Of fine-spun webs; the starter's pistol stings
Silence like a Christmas-cracker's snap
As they surge forward for the opening lap.
When we draw closer to the track we can
Dissect each insect into thing and man,
And, nearer yet, proximity reveals
The frantic knees, like twiddling thumbs, the wheels
Sizzling on the labile grass below
The ram's-horn handlebars, the wheels that show
How spokes of ice have melted in hot speed,
A silvery blur. The winner's head, black bead,
Is lifted, as he rides across the line,
And, humanised, he smiles. The circled shine
Of spokes now flickers, ticking down, each wheel
Seen first as fine-sliced lemon, then as steel
And rubber now the spell of speed has fled.
The other riders finish, every head
Stays down, seems bowed in misery or shame.
Every man is numbered, but his name
Will be restored when evening comes and he
Puts on his clothes of full humanity,
Drives home, his bicycle strapped on the roof
Of car or van, upturned, a trophy, proof
Of having hunted with the brave; and so
Its wheels, revolving slowly in the flow
Of darkening breeze, may faintly rhyme with how
Shot prey's dead limbs might stir; these wheels could swing
The pendent heart, much like a living thing.

Vernon Scannell

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

"Neo Anti-Semitism"

THAT A "Neo Anti-Semitism" had to erupt in the Federal Republic of Germany is in many respects, no coincidence.

A new aspect is that *this* time, considering the very small number of Jews and their lack of gravitation in the economic, political and cultural life of Germany, we have the phenomenon of "Anti-Semitism without Jews." This is surely unique in modern history.

Henryk Broder's points on this subject ("Fassbinder, Germans & Jews", in the March ENCOUNTER) are—mostly—very well taken, and one looks forward to the "flaming tract" which he is preparing. When he completes it, it is to be hoped that he will analyse whether, and to what extent, the anti-Israel position of certain liberal-Left dailies and weeklies have contributed to "Neo Anti-Semitism" in Germany.

GERHARD WOLFGANG GOLDBERG

Institute of Sociology
University of Wuerzburg

Pope, Tucholsky & Warhol

IT WAS eagle-eyed of your Rowohlt man, Dr Michael Naumann, to spot ("Letters", April) the Tucholsky/Warhol parallelism. What, for one, was "everybody's famous for 15 minutes" was, for the other (almost half-a-century earlier), satirising a related evanescence of styles in culture and fleeting fashions in fame, "one month of immortality" per genius.

If all good things come in three, then may I add Alexander Pope to the team of trend-spotters? In his *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), Pope notes:

In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thriv'd with large increase.

So we are in yet another Affluent Society, but in far slower times where a style was not lost in a mere quarter-hour nor a notoriety in 30 days. Yet surely a literary Guinness-book-of-records would ascribe to Pope an earlier perception of the same ironising idea.

His praise is lost, who stays 'till all commend
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.

Only that the timepieces in the 18th century ticked less hectically, more haltingly:

No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare three-score is all ev'n that can boast. . . .

Percentage-wise, the decline (from a thousand to sixty) could nicely match the smaller time-spans Tucholsky and Warhol had in mind when they took the quick measure of thin talents in "fat ages."

Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-liv'd vanity is lost:
Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,
That gayly blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.

JOHN L. MACGREGOR

Oxford

Norway & the Surrender

I READ with great interest M. R. D. Foot's article "Military Leverage" in your June 1985 issue. The story of the SAS and SOE exploits in World War II is fascinating indeed. I have, from personal experience, only one comment. On p. 62 the author writes:

> "The garrison in Norway, scores of thousands strong, surrendered in the end to young men in plain clothes wearing armbands, backed by fewer than a thousand SAS parachutists. . . ."

The situation was, however, quite different. The "garrison" in Norway, meaning the German Occupation forces, totalled some 350,000 men; and the surrender on 8 May 1945 was ordered by Hitler's successor, Admiral Dönitz, and signed by the Supreme Commander of the *Wehrmacht* in Norway, General Franz Böhme. Some 30,000 men of Allied forces under the command of General Sir Andrew Thorne took care of disarming and interning the 350,000 German troops, and returning them to their country, while the Norwegian Underground forces (*Milorg*), some 40,000 strong, were upholding law and order in Norway during the transition period. For details, see J. Chr. Hauge, *Frigjøringen* (Oslo, 1970, 1985).

ARVID BRODERSEN

Oslo

The European Spirit

THE ARTICLE by Vernon Bogdanor on "Europe" in the April Encounter almost restores my faith in the intellectual character of the English mind. Here is an Oxford don on contemporary Continental problems at his very best: informed, analytical, thoughtful, sound.

I say *almost*—because there is that absurd, ridiculous, and ignorant first sentence which you surprisingly left as written:

> "The consciousness of being 'European' is, so it would appear, primarily a 20th-century phenomenon."

If that's the way things "appear" to Dr Bogdanor, then perhaps we had better all begin rethinking the old Oxonian problem of appearances and realities.

To be sure, whether the consciousness of being European is old or new is not absolutely decisive to the practical matters of breaking out of the current "Deadlock" so incisively described. Still, one ought to remind even the most broadminded of insular English spirits that there *is* a European tradition of at least a thousand years. As a matter of fact, the late Denis de Rougemont, an indefatigable European publicist whose recent passing in Geneva was widely mourned, put together a classic anthology on *Europa* which was published in half-a-dozen languages. He took the trouble of pinpointing the origins of "European consciousness" even into the ancient world, presenting texts from Hesiod, Horace, and Aristotle. Dante and Erasmus figured prominently. The "European spirit" in the writings of Goethe and Schiller, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Leibniz and Condorcet, was graphically illustrated. Why go on? Even the much-misunderstood Nietzsche was, in his anti-Teutonism, a proponent of a larger European attitude and loyalty—as was Heine, and indeed Thomas Mann.

As I say, Bogdanor's general argument was an important contribution to the contemporary discussion of "Common Market" dilemmas. His opening sentence should really have been cut. In any event let us hope it was an unimportant, if regrettable, slip of the tongue.

FRIEDRICH BUND

Heidelberg

Kremlinology

IN HIS COMMENT on my article "The Arcane Art of Kremlinology" (ENCOUNTER, March 1983), Ernst Lowe's critical remarks ("Letters", April 1985) were ostensibly addressed to an interview which George Urban had conducted with Ambassador Max Kampelman ("Can We Negotiate with the Russians?", February and March 1985); but

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in fact the bulk of the remarks were directed to me.

In that recent interview with Urban, Ambassador Kampelman openly declared his adherence to the view that the Soviet Union is a totalitarian state but he was nevertheless concerned to demonstrate that, through the Helsinki process, the West can put sufficient pressure on that state to contribute to its liberalisation. Ernst Lowe obviously meant to deny the evolutionary possibility. The crucial difference of view comes in respect to the "atomisation" of Soviet society, which he sees as the totalitarian keystone of what he envisions as the stability and durability of a régime which he believes is beyond evolutionary possibility, liberal or otherwise.

I would agree that under Stalin the atomisation of society—making every individual directly and exclusively subordinate to (and dependent upon) the enormous bureaucratic apparatus of Party and State—was a fact; but I would also argue that, even at the height of Stalin's power, elements of family loyalty, religious conviction, intimate friendship and, within the bureaucracy, factional cohesiveness continued to play an important if diminished role.

Our disagreement becomes monumental, however, beginning at the point where the *systematic* use of political terror was *de facto* abandoned and replaced with (*1*) the occasional use of terror to delimit the boundaries of behaviour acceptable to the régime, and (*2*) the massive employment of "material incentives" as a replacement for systematic terror.

Since 1953, the year of the great change, this huge political system has in fact slowly evolved in a non-automatic direction, one in which the increasing cohesiveness of sub-groups has moved the Soviet totalitarian polity in the direction of greater divisiveness and diminished stability. In "The Arcane Art of Kremlinology" I dealt with the manifestation of this process at the level of leadership. I should mention, very briefly, other features of the same general development.

Today, when the Soviet standard of living is *thrice* that of 1950, the Soviet masses are coming to regard "Socialism" as a failed system. They seek solace in alcoholism, corruption, anti-Semitism, Protestant sectarianism, and even in a return to Russian Orthodoxy. Their disillusionment is a product of many factors. Khrushchev's opening to the West, coupled with a world-wide revolution in comunications, let them understand how the West lived; while since ca. 1978 a stagnation in average real income has apparently set in. There has also been a serious decline in the public health and a distinct hardening of class lines.

The Kremlin has been concerned to offset this failure of popular morale by silently permitting the development of a "new NEP" in the form of a massive but tolerated corruption; by spending a third of its hard currency for the importation of meat and fodder; and by carrying an enormous subsidy (roughly 40% of the value) of the prices of staple foods. Is it not a fair inference that, given the non-availability of systematic political terror, the men in the Kremlin fear the outbreak of strikes and riots of sufficient force to destabilise the régime?

THE PUBLICATION (in 1977) of Brezhnev's revision of Stalin's 1936 Constitution, to take another case, was long delayed because the minority Republics attempted to insist on some substantive implementation of the federal provisions of this fundamental law. Today, it turns out, Moscow segregates Muslim military recruits in labour battalions, denies them military training, and evidently fears that the reliability of Soviet combat units might otherwise be endangered. Also there now exists a "Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments"—it appears to be the only purely voluntary organisation existing in the USSR, and its membership is purely Great-Russian. Aside from restoring churches and monasteries "of importance to the Russian past" it played a major role in making Lake Baikal pollution-free, and it publicly opposes "excessive" industrialisation. For someone familiar with the role of the Matica Hrvatska in the Yugoslav crisis of 1971 or that of *Solidarity* in the Poland of 1980, this Society has all the earmarks of a potential political party.

Finally, it should be noted that, since the termination of the systematic use of terror over 30 years ago, Soviet youth has developed sufficient *esprit de corps* to legitimise Western popular music and the wearing of Western blue jeans (and even Western T-shirts) in defiance of the express wishes of the régime. More important, the dissident movement within the bureaucratic class has itself become important enough to produce international scandals and, in the 1960s, a flood of illicit (*samizdat*) publications which, although today reduced to a rivulet by the occasional use of terror, produces serious limitation on the use of such substitute presses as the xerox machine and the personal computer.

I cannot accept a reading that the Soviet totalitarian polity is essentially immutable. But it is also true that I could not agree with those (including Kampelman?) who argue that the Soviet state is undergoing a process of "liberalisation" or "humanisation." Rather I am of the opinion that what we are witnessing is a unique process of *totalitarian deterioration* which is, and will be, accompanied by increasing international tension as a threatened régime attempts to place the blame for its troubles on the foreign enemy.

R. V. BURKS

Detroit
Michigan

The Once & Future Thatcher

A Reply to Edward Pearce—By PATRICK COSGRAVE

SO Edward Pearce still believes ("The End of Thatcher", ENCOUNTER, April) that Mrs Thatcher will not lead the Conservative Party at the next general election and—to judge from the tone of his piece—believes that she does not deserve to do so.

Anthony Hartley, on the other hand ("From Disraeli to Thatcher", April), while he commits himself to no definite prediction, provides a good deal of evidence for the proposition that the Prime Minister, by means of her determined radicalism over the years, has created what he calls a new clientele for the Tories—one essentially of an upwardly mobile working class—which will see her through again. Hartley commits himself to nothing so vulgar as a prediction, but his stressing of the similarities between the record of Disraeli and that of Margaret Thatcher is a valuable corrective to much of the political cant of recent months (cant in the main given voice by the superannuated in the Tory ranks), and will certainly hearten the lady herself.

I find very little to disagree with in Anthony Hartley's analysis. Edward Pearce is an entirely different matter. Hartley refers to him as an "admirer" of the Prime Minister, and that description rather staggered me, for I cannot recall any praise he has ever given her that was other than grudging—as, for instance, in his earlier ENCOUNTER article ("The Road to Rocky III", September-October 1985) to which he refers, in which he first made his prediction that the Thatcher era was over. However, to understand his position now—before going on to refute his arguments—one has to appreciate

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his very distinctive attitude to politics, compounded as it is of dislike and morbid fascination, and based on a consequent inability to understand how the British system works.

Hartley thinks that Edward Pearce has a lot of the Gladstonian Liberal in him and—at least so far as moralising ferocity is concerned—I agree with him. But we must never forget that, in so far as he is to be judged a man of the Right, Pearce is a convert from the Labour Party, and like many such has found the grass on the other side insufficiently green for his taste. There is a revealing passage in his latest ENCOUNTER article in which he accuses Mrs Thatcher (given the tone there is no other suitable verb) of having "abandoned philosophy for office." The underlying judgment is inescapable: the conviction politician, perhaps the ideological politician, has gone. Somewhat unsavoury stratagems are being resorted to in order to retain power. These will not work. *Ergo*, Margaret Thatcher is finished.

PEARCE OPENS WITH a meticulous and deadly analysis of government conduct of the Westland affair, and I can find no fault in his account. He follows this with a sketch of the various other blunders of the Government since 1983, and concludes that they were the consequence of hubris—a hubris not justified by the real nature of the electoral success of 1983, which, he says, had many other more important causes than the efficient conduct of government since 1979.

I believe that he has entirely misread the situation, and that one of the reasons for his doing so is the deep-seated contempt with which he regards most politicians, and the operation of the British political system itself. To get my own prediction out of the way, I will express the conviction that Mrs Thatcher will lead at the next general election, and that she will be returned with a reduced but perfectly sufficient overall majority. I will deal first with the mechanics of staying in power, before asking whether she deserves to do so.

Pearce thinks it possible that, come the autumn, Mrs Thatcher might face "a humiliatingly high score for a straw candidate or, who knows, actual defeat at the hands of a real one. . . ." He is making far too much of the precedent of 1974-75 and forgets, indeed, how exceptionally difficult it is (in either major British party) to get rid of a leader who is fit and determined to go on. In this century in the Conservative Party—apart from exceptional circumstances, such as those in which Austen Chamberlain found himself in 1922, or his brother in 1940—only two leaders (out of eleven before Mrs Thatcher) have been overthrown when in good health and against their will.[1] Of the two—Arthur Balfour and Edward Heath—Balfour was weary of the job after years of attrition and failure. As to Heath—who was fit and still ambitious at the time—it should be noted both that he had a record of electoral failure and that, even then, the wounds inflicted by the leadership battle of the time, remaining as they do to affect the Party today, were so deep as to ensure that no significant section of the Party will readily undertake a repeat performance. (This is why, of course, as Pearce rightly says, the successor to Mrs Thatcher when the time comes is likely to be neither a "wet" nor a "dry.") As long, therefore, as she is fit and willing Margaret Thatcher cannot be overthrown before a general election. I see no significant diminution in her energy or commitment.

But Pearce also believes that, if she were to go on, she would probably lose a general election; and he supports this contention with various dubious arguments about what happened in 1983. He goes over the familiar ground of argument about how kind the electoral system is to the Tories and attributes all-too-much weight to the Falklands War. In the view of Russell Lewis, which is also my own,[2] she owed the *size* of her majority to the war (and to the inordinately inept leadership of the Labour Party) but not its fact. Her natural overall majority then was probably about 60. I think it will be between 50 and 60 next time.

NOR CAN Pearce so lightly discount (he barely mentions it) how little the Labour Party has changed since 1983. When the time comes, Tory campaigners—principal among them the Prime Minister—will have the most searching questions to ask of their opponents. What, for example, will Neil Kinnock really do about trade-union law? What about the sale of council houses? What about "law and order"? What about defence? What about education? It is then that the alarm bells will begin to ring; and most alarmed will be what Anthony Hartley calls Mrs Thatcher's "new clientele", for they have much to lose from any risks taken with Labour. Because, although Neil Kinnock has improved matters greatly over Michael Foot, the continuing power of the Left (and Kinnock's inability surgically to dispose of it) will rightly arouse fear.

BECAUSE of this fear will come the crushing of the SDP/Liberal Alliance; for the electorate will not be exercising by-election protest votes, but choosing a government, and the risk cannot be taken, to the extent that the electoral system's bias would be defeated, of Alliance votes letting Labour in.

Mind you, I do not think that that means the Alliance has no future. Mrs Thatcher has said that she thinks the next non-Conservative Prime Minister will be David Owen. If Labour goes down again next time there will have to be a regrouping of the Moderate Left, and that is Dr Owen's great opportunity, to take advantage of a situation very like that which would have obtained had Harold Wilson lost in 1964.

WOULD SHE deserve victory? In spite of achieving nothing like as much as she hoped to achieve, and in spite of all the blunders, she has revolutionised British politics, as is widely recognised from points of view as far apart from one another as the editors of *Marxism Today* and Anthony Hartley. But constitutional revolutions are slow affairs. I believe her heritage is very nearly ineradicable, but that we will not see its full benefits until after she has gone. Meanwhile, the mechanics of the matter as I have outlined them, plus the necessity or justice of the matter, are best expressed in the words of Peregrine Worsthorne (who has severely criticised her even more than Edward Pearce):

> "It is the monstrous unfairness of so much of the criticism of Mrs Thatcher that makes me write now in her defence. I remember what went before and could so easily, given her departure, return again. Compared with some ideal British Government, she may be doing badly. But compared with any actual Government since the War, she is still doing quite miraculously well, as is the country itself. . . ."[3]

That judgment is enough for me, and it will be shared widely enough to see her through. Edward Pearce is a master of *saevo indignatio*, but it blinds him to political reality.

---

[1] Neville Chamberlain was, of course, in indifferent health, and died not long after. But it was the Norwegian vote in the House of Commons that convinced him he could not go on. The circumstances were quite different from 1911, 1922, or 1975.

[2] Russell Lewis, *Margaret Thatcher* (1983 ed.); Patrick Cosgrave, *Thatcher: The First Term* (1985).

[3] *Sunday Telegraph*, 9 March 1986.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY

Thamesmouth Printing Group,

Service House, Stock Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Life & Letters Today

Hollywood

NO HOLDS BARD: **Shakespeare may have been read in more elegant surroundings, but seldom with more enthusiasm.**

"I lived in a Lower East Side tenement with one toilet on the floor, and I used to sit in that toilet and read Shakespeare", recalls Walter Matthau, who hosts *"The Shakespeare Hour"* (Sundays at 10 p.m. on Channel 13).

"They'd bang on the door and say, 'Mr Shakespeare, can you let us in? We have to use the toilet.'"

The first and only time he did Shakespeare was as Iago in *Othello* on the TV *Philco Playhouse* in 1952. But Matthau is not surprised he was asked to host the five-play series. "They were smart to get me."

NEW YORK POST

Washington, D.C.

S.O.B. *Expressing irritation at the press is a time-honoured tradition among the nation's presidents. And President Ronald Reagan proved Friday that he subscribes to that tradition. As reporters peppered him with questions. Mr Reagan was caught using an expletive to vent his frustration.*

"Sons of bitches", the President muttered, a remark he apparently thought would not be picked up by recording equipment.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, initially said that Mr Reagan "doesn't recall saying it" or even hearing anyone else utter the offending words. But it became evident that CBS television had a tape that proved otherwise.

"If he said it", Mr Speakes joked, "he said, 'It's sunny and you're rich.'"

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Las Vegas

FREE PRESS: *The "Las Vegas Daily Optic" has listed 101 reasons to buy it—or to buy any newspaper. Among the suggestions were:*

No. 1, wrap gifts with it;
No. 43, sleep under it;
No. 78, use it as kitty litter;
No. 82, make wobbly things level with it.

No. 101 on the list of down-to-earth suggestions was, "Roll it tight and use it as a defensive weapon."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

SIGNS OF THE TIME: *Have you noticed how much more imaginative shop names have become?*

Family names have been replaced by eye-catching phrases such as "Den Of Antiquity" (antiques), "Deals on Wheels" (cars), "Come Clean" (laundry) and "Wicker's World" (baskets).

Gimmicky signs started with boutiques in the 1970s and the fashion business still offers examples like "Rich Bitch . . . Shady Lady . . . Swanky Modes . . . French Dressing . . . InJEANious . . . Wedding Bells" and "Infanticipating."

But some of the cleverest are above fish-and-chip shops—"Fryer Tuck . . . Better Batter . . . Sole Food."

Restaurants and pubs include "Walk Right Inn . . . Bon Appetit . . . Posh Nosh . . . Bottoms Up . . . Brahms and Liszt."

Hairdressers rate highly, too, with "Curl Up and Dry . . . Hairport . . . Hair We Go" and "Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow. . . ."

DAILY MAIL

Los Angeles

LESS THAN ZERO: **These rich Los Angeles kids have freedom without meaning. They can do whatever they please, and therefore whatever they do can never really please them. The kids, as the *Wall Street Journal* headline put it, are not all right.**

They are aimless, feckless, mindless. They never read a book. Their mental life revolves around lines of coke, lines of songs, and lines of dialogue that usually amount to a word or two.

Ask them where they've been and they say "Around"; ask them what they've been doing and they say "Things"; ask them why and they say "Why not?"

LONDON STANDARD

Philadelphia

LOST BOOK: *A book that is probably at least 100 years overdue has been returned anonymously to the Pennsylvania State library. The "irreplaceable" 328-year-old copy of "Townsend's Collection", a battered leather-bound volume of British 17th-century laws, turned up in a large envelope, without explanation, in a library book-drop.*

Fines for late return would amount to "thousands of dollars", but these were unlikely to be collected, a library spokesman said. As near as they can track it, the book was borrowed "sometime between 1823 and about 1900." With records like this, no wonder books get lost.

TELEGRAPH/DAILY MAIL

London

BOOK MARX: **Foyles had not expected to find itself in the front line of miners' violence. Last Thursday, however, the bookshop found Coal not Dole stickers plastered across the window displaying Nicholas Hagger's "Scargill the Stalinist." Later protestors invaded the shop itself, and stuck more stickers across the bookshelves. Now Foyles has been threatened with broken windows unless the books are removed. Far from complying, it has ordered more.**

THE TIMES

London

JUNGLE OR ZOO: *The BBC serial "Eastenders" is now thoroughly established [Ronald Hastings writes] with millions of viewers who like to suffer vicariously. It is well directed and edited, convincingly written and better acted than anyone can have expected. But regulars do have to accept endless moaning with every character dragging around his or her personal anguish.*

Watching the English soap-operas is like viewing the tiny lives of mice in a cage. Watching the American series is like watching expensive leopards prowling round a luxurious cage. Either way it's not the jungle of life, just a zoo.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Read how GKN became a successful international automotive and industrial group.

(The latest chapter is out now.)

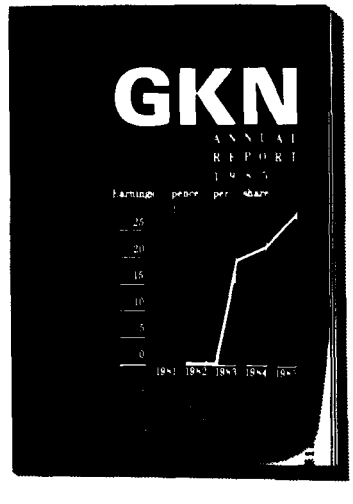
1985 was a successful year for GKN, both in terms of performance and strategic development.

The reshaping and repositioning of the Group, now a world leader in the design and manufacture of technologically advanced products, has brought with it much better financial results.

Pre-tax profits are up 15.2% from last year and stand at a record £132.7 million. Earnings of the year are up 37.4% from £46.0 million to £63.2 million. Earnings per share have risen 31% from 20.3p to 26.6p with an increase in yearly dividend of 14.3% from 10.5p to 12.0p.

GKN is one of the UK's largest companies and exporters, generating half its income from overseas subsidiaries.

A substantial R & D programme (£45 million in 1985) and a commitment to specialisation in selected business areas will continue to create exciting new opportunities in world markets.



For a copy of the 1985 Report and Accounts fill in the coupon below.

You'll find it makes good reading.

Please send me a copy of the 1985 GKN Annual Report and Accounts.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____ Postcode_____

Group Public Relations, GKN plc, 7 Cleveland Row, London SW1A 1DB. Tel: 01-930 2424.

E6 86

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The National Bureau of Economic Research

engages in empirical investigation of topics
of the greatest importance in the field of economics.
Its findings are issued in the form of scientific reports
presented without recommendations on policy.
These are intended to aid all concerned individuals, however divergent their views,
to base their arguments on objective knowledge.

The University of Chicago Press has been, since 1980,
principal publisher of NBER volumes, such as these listed below:

POPULATION AND ECONOMIC CHANGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Edited by **Richard A. Easterlin**

TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
In Three Volumes:
1. INDIVIDUAL STUDIES
Edited by **Anne O. Krueger, Hal B. Lary, Terry Monson,** and **Narongchai Akrasanee**
2. FACTOR SUPPLY AND SUBSTITUTION
Edited by **Anne O. Krueger**
3. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS
Anne O. Krueger

HORIZONTAL EQUITY, UNCERTAINTY, AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
Edited by **Martin David** and **Timothy Smeeding**

FINANCING CORPORATE CAPITAL FORMATION
Edited by **Benjamin M. Friedman**

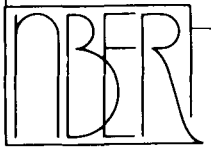
IMPORT COMPETITION AND RESPONSE
Edited by **Jagdish N. Bhagwati**

MONETARY TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM
Their Relation to Income, Prices, and Interest Rates, 1867-1975
Milton Friedman and **Anna J. Schwartz**

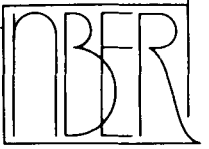
EXCHANGE RATES AND INTERNATIONAL MACROECONOMICS
Edited by **Jacob A. Frenkel**

THE TAXATION OF INCOME FROM CAPITAL A Comparative Study of the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and West Germany
Edited by **Mervyn A. King** and **Don Fullerton**

THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF INFLATION
Michael R. Darby, James R. Lothian, and **Arthur E. Gandolfi, Anna J. Schwartz, Alan C. Stockman**



For information on these and other NBER volumes,
or on any of the thousands of our other books in print, write to:
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD, England, or to:
5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.



The University of Chicago Press

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED